Hafa Adai!

Data gathering to start for '22 NMI Prevailing Wage Study. PAGE 3
5 weeks after eruption: Tonga's internet finally restored. PAGE 7

$1

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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27th COVID-related death in NMI

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. have confirmed the CNMI's 27th COVID-19-related death.

» CHCC reports 171 new cases

In Guam, the Joint Information Center was notified that the territory's 320th COVID-19-related fatality occurred at the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam on Feb. 23, 2022. The patient was an 82-year-old male, un-

See NMI on Page 4

A man holding his bicycle with a school bag on it gets a throat swab during a mass COVID-19 test at a residential compound in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province, Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022. AP

DUE TO PANDEMIC RESPONSE

4 agencies exceed Q1 budget

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

For the first quarter of fiscal year 2022, four law enforcement agencies exceeded their total combined budget of $3.35 million by incurring total of actual expenditures of $4.98 million, with most of the excess amount going to the CNMI's COVID-19 response.

In his financial report for the first quarter of fiscal year 2022, Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig said their expenditures in excess of budgetary allotments are attributed to the CNMI's law enforcement efforts in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Atalig

»'Overall, revenue collection is 4.5% greater than the forecasted amount'

Four law enforcement

See AGENCIES on Page 4

NEW LOCATION KRIZEL TUAZON

Executives and staff of telecommunications company IT&E pose for a commemorative photo soon after the blessing of the company's new headquarters at its new location in San Jose, Saipan, last Tuesday, Feb. 16,2022 (the old Payless ShoeSource site). All IT&E services are already available at the company's new location and IT&E's Chalan Laulau store has already been shut down.

WHO: New COVID cases fall for the the third week, deaths also drop

GENEVA (AP)—The number of new coronavirus cases around the world fell 21%

See WHO on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:12pm, Feb. 23, 2022

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Additional Dose Vaccinated:	56.1%
Days since last community transmission	2

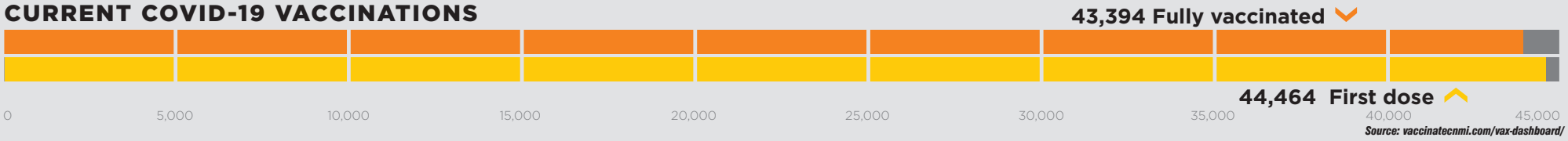
Pfizer/BioNTech	
Initiated:	37,999
Fully Vaccinated:	37,069
Moderna	
Initiated:	5,329
Fully Vaccinated:	5,189
Janssen	
Fully vaccinated:	1,136
Additional Dose:	20,939

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	43,211	349	43,560
Recovered	39,545	458	40,003
Active	2,888	349	3,237
Deaths	319	1	320

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	8,711	171	8,882
Recovered	7,329	240	7,569
Active	1,115	171	1,286
Deaths	26	1	27

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

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World leaders hit back at Russia with non-military actions over its actions on Ukraine.
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Hong Kong will test its entire population of 7.5 million people for COVID-19 in March.
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Reps. Richard Lizama and Leila host another trash drop-off, this time in Kannat Tabla.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Dayao is named a Bixler scholar at Colby College

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI's own Arvin Dayao, a sophomore at Colby College, has been chosen as one of a handful of students to receive a Julius Seelye Bixler scholarship for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Dayao, the valedictorian of Grace Christian Academy's Class of 2020, was named a Julius Seelye Bixler Scholar for his extraordinary academic engagement and commitment. The Colby College website states that Bixler scholars are typically top-ranking students based on their cumulative academic record at the end of the preceding year.

The GCA alumnus stands at No. 4 out of 556 other students in his Class of 2024 at Colby College.

The Bixler Scholarship is awarded every year to a small group of students in the sophomore, junior, and senior classes who have distinguished themselves academically.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
File photo shows Grace Christian Academy alumnus Arvin Dayao soon after he was awarded a full-ride QuestBridge scholarship to Colby College.

According to Dayao's parents, they are proud of their child's achievements and were not expecting it at all.

Mirasol Dayao said her son was awarded the scholarship back in September 2021 but they only found out about it in February 2022 because he hadn't checked his mailbox in months.

His mother said that Dayao has always been on top of his assignments academically, ensuring that he completes everything even before a given deadline.

"From a young age, we instilled in him the importance of education. Now that he's in college, all his achievements are his own. We don't push him or force him to go above and beyond, it's all him and we are very proud of him," she said.

Applicator certification required for disinfecting services — BECQ

The Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality regulates the commercial use of pesticides and the use of Restricted Use Pesticides in the CNMI. In accordance with NMIAC § 65-70-100, a pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any pest. This includes the commercial use of disinfectants, commercial use sanitizers, and any substances that makes a claim to kill bacteria and viruses.

In accordance with NMIAC § 65-70-400, persons who use or supervise the use of any pesticide for commercial purposes and persons who uses, sells, or distributes RUPs must obtain a certification.

To obtain a pesticide applicator certification an individual must meet the eligibility requirements and pass a written competency examination with a score of 70% or higher. The exam evaluates an individual's standards of competency on pesticide use in the CNMI, worker protection standards, and regulatory requirements. Exams are administered and held at the BECQ Office in Gualo Rai, Saipan on the second Monday of each month from 9am to 11am. Exams are administered upon request on Rota and Tinian in coordination with the DEQ Pesticide Program.

To register for the pesticide applicator exam, submit an application any BECQ office. There is a registration fee of $10 for both private and commercial applicants. Individuals that do not pass the exam may retake after 90 days. Afterwards a new form and fee must be re-submitted to re-register for the exam.

Exam results are confidential and will be sent within the next five business days after the exam date. Successful applicants must submit a certification application along with the appropriate certification fees; $50 for commercial applicators and $10 for private applicators.

For more information and for application forms contact BECQ at 664-8500 or visit the BECQ website at www.deq.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

Data gathering to start for '22 NMI Prevailing Wage Study

The CNMI Department of Commerce's Central Statistics Division announced yesterday the beginning of data collection for the 2022 CNMI Prevailing Wage Study to produce the CNMI hourly wage statistics for 2022.

All private businesses, public agencies, and organizations, whether with employees or no employees in the CNMI, are urged to participate in the 2022 PWS survey. The survey data collection period begins on March 1, 2022, and ends on March 15, 2022.

Like the 2021 PWS, the 2022 PWS data is submitted through a web portal. Businesses and organizations can access the portal through http://cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/.

For those who registered and participated in the 2021 PWS survey, simply use your username and password that you created in 2021 to log in to the portal, update your business/agency/organization information, and submit your employee data for 2022.

For everyone else who will submit survey data for the first time via the CNMI PWS portal, you will be prompted to create a username and a password. Creating your username and password registers you into the site and allows you to provide basic directory information about your business/agency/organization and submit the requested employee data for the survey. Be sure to allow yourself time to review and understand the survey instructions provided on the portal before proceeding to complete the survey.

The 2018 NMI US Workforce Act requires the CNMI to publish a prevailing wage report annually for CW-1 visa determination and approval by the U.S. Department of Labor. Additionally, the 2022 PWS data will be used to publish a separate report detailing the survey methodology with a more detailed occupational wage statistics for PERM, H-1B and H-2B determination and approval by the U.S. Department of Labor.

"We ask all businesses, agencies, and organizations to complete this important survey. This will be the seventh round of the prevailing wage study survey, but our fourth annual PWS survey since 2019 under the mandate of the 2018 Workforce Act. I also want to extend my appreciation to the Department of the Interior's Insular Affairs Office for funding this project," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres.

Commerce Secretary Edward Deleon Guerrero emphasizes the importance of completing the 2022 PWS survey, "I thank our private business partners and stakeholders and the public agencies on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian for putting the word out to promote the successful completion of this important survey. I humbly ask every business, agency, and organization in the CNMI to take some time to complete the 2022 PWS survey," said Deleon Guerrero.

Questions and inquiries for the 2022 PWS should be directed to the Prevailing Wage Study project at telephone numbers 322-3005/3007 or email address cnmi.csd@commerce.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

ON THE NET

- Survey portal: http://cnmi-data.commerce.gov.mp/

Black Micro Corp. hosts job fair on Tinian

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Following the official start of the construction of the Tinian divert airfield project, Black Micro Corp., the company that was contracted to complete the $161.8-million U.S Department of Defense project, has launched a job fair to provide jobs for Tinian residents.

According to Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, yesterday, Black Micro held the first of many job fairs with the intent to hire hundreds of Tinian residents to help in build what is expected to be a four-year-long construction of the divert airfield.

"The employment opportunities aspect of this project has prompted federal contractors such as Black Micro Corp. to hold job fairs to employ our local people. The company has reached out to my office for assistance for the first job fair scheduled [yesterday] morning at the Tinian Youth Center. This is to provide interested individuals with information for potential employment opportunities," he said.

Aldan said the project will continue to demand a labor force that will create more employment opportunities for the people of Tinian moving forward.

"Over the past couple of years, many of us have envisioned the potential economic growth that the divert airfield project would bring to Tinian starting with employment, and business opportunities, to procuring locally goods and materials," he said.

Aldan said he is sure that the start of the project will only continue to bring attention to the island of Tinian and encourage other businesses to branch out to the island.

"In fact, this agreement and the divert airfield project have brought Tinian much attention to business owners such as Triple J from our neighboring island of Saipan, including newly established and local business owners in light of the expected military buildup," he said.

The Tinian mayor said this long-anticipated project has the potential to be the economic driver that Tinian needs.

"This much anticipated project that many of us have been looking forward has the potential to be an economic catalyst during a time when the future remains uncertain for island of Tinian due to COVID-19," he said.

New oxygen system installed at ACS site

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force continues to upgrade the Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort Saipan in preparation for the current and any future COVID-19 surges. The most recent upgrade was the installation of a brand-new oxygen system.

According to Patrick Guerrero, the governor's authorized representative, a portable trailer-type oxygen machine was purchased last month for the ACS in order to provide an uninterrupted supply of oxygen to those who suffer severe symptoms of COVID-19.

"We just recently installed a new oxygen system. In the beginning, we were using oxygen tanks at the bedside but, as we got more information from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, it was discovered that COVID-19 patients on ventilators end up using high-flow oxygen. So we've upgraded and purchased a trailer-type oxygen machine that we're plugging straight into the building," he said.

Guerrero explained that typically, a typical oxygen tank could last for merely a few minutes to an hour on patients experiencing severe respiratory complications due to COVID-19. With the new system that could typically hold over 900 gallons, patients will be provided uninterrupted oxygen flow and it is also more convenient for health workers.

"This upgraded machine would allow doctors, should patients need ventilators down at the Alternative Care Site, to just plug those ventilators into oxygen supply [vents] on the walls," he said.

This new upgrade, he said, is just a means to remain on top of future variants surges during these uncertain times.

"Even though we get less severe symptoms these days, it seems we never know what's to come. It could be another variant or a surge again. We're always trying to prepare for those," he said.

Guerrero said it's essential to remain prepared and that means continuing to maintain the CNMI's ACS site.

"There was a time where we were questioned about why we were still keeping up the place because we didn't have any cases. But look where we're at now. So we need to be prepared by still maintaining that facility. So we continue to maintain the ACS, and we also continue to upgrade it," he said.

AGENCIES

From Page 1

agencies show this trend: the Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, Department of Corrections, and the Division of Customs and Biosecurity.

Atalig also disclosed that overall, revenue collection in the amount of $35,343,868 is 4.5% greater than the forecasted amount of $33,835,531 for that period.

With respect to the CNMI's economic outlook, he said while federal assistance in the form of the American Rescue Plan Act has supported expenditures despite the widespread impact of COVID-19 on the CNMI labor market, data from the first quarter showcases continual impacts on the wider economy outside of domestic consumption.

Atalig provided House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) with the financial information for the first quarter of fiscal year 2022 with an ending report date of Dec. 31, 2021, as required by law.

Atalig said that DPS was appropriated $1,234,719 for the first quarter of fiscal year 2022 but its actual expenditure amount exceeded that, at $2,045,625.

For the Department of Corrections, actual appropriation of $698,362 was insufficient to cover the actual expenditure amount of $1,134,275.

For the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the actual appropriation of $944,065 was surpassed by its actual expenditure amount of $1,099,250.

Atalig said the Division of Customs and Biosecurity, which is under the Finance Department, was appropriated $482,436, but the actual expenditures amounted to $700,858.

Atalig said first quarter appropriation is about 11.8% less than actual expenditures.

In sum, he said, unanticipated expenses and underbudgeted accounts resulted in a significant deficiency, when comparing expenditures and appropriations for the first quarter.

On the revenues side, Atalig said Wage and Salary Tax collections in the first quarter stood at $6,190,451 or approximately 2.7% greater than the forecasted budget collection.

He said the first quarter Northern Marianas Territorial Income Tax collections of personal income amounted to $2,108,175.

He said corporate income tax collection was valued at $1,384,072, or approximately 163% greater than the forecasted amount of $526,192.

Atalig said Business Gross Revenue Tax collection for the period is $15,452,207, which is approximately 16.8% more than the forecasted amount.

Meanwhile, he said, Excise Tax collections yielded $6,873,026 or 19.9% less than the forecasted budget.

With respect to economic outlook, Atalig said the tourism industry under normal circumstances usually increases overall demand for goods and services in the CNMI by greatly expanding the consumer's presence on the island at any given time.

"This increase in population caused by transient visitors provides for additional consumption, increased business revenue and a demand to necessitate further imports to serve as the basis for excise taxation," he said.

This could mean a rosier picture of the CNMI economy in the months ahead. With both Korea and the proposed Japan Travel Bubble programs, the CNMI can anticipate an increase in tourism arrivals, Atalig said, which means an increased demand for goods and services, and an increase in revenues being generated to help the CNMI meet the fiscal year 2022 projections.

He added that with the CNMI's economic recovery and inclusion of federal assistance through the American Rescue Plan Act funds and expected federal infrastructure projects, they anticipate the infusion of funds would benefit small businesses and non-profits to support local economic activity, through the demand for goods and services could help support those fiscal year 2022 projections.

NMI

From Page 1

vaccinated, with underlying health conditions, who tested positive on Feb. 9. This came as Guam reported 349 new cases and 42 hospitalizations.

Also in the CNMI, a total of 171 new cases were confirmed positive for COVID-19, bringing the CNMI's total to 8,882 cases since March 26, 2020.

Of the 171 new cases, 170 were identified on Feb. 21 and one prior to Feb. 21, 2022. Six of the new cases were identified on Tinian. The vaccination statuses of the 171 cases are pending verification.

As of Feb. 22, 2022, eight individuals were hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, two of them unvaccinated, four vaccinated, and two partially vaccinated. Two of the eight are on ventilators.

Of the total cases that have been identified in the CNMI so far, as of Feb. 21, 2022, there have been 7,569 recoveries;1,286 active cases; and 27 COVID-19-related deaths.

A total of 8,245 of these cases were identified via community testing and 637 via travel testing.

A total of 65 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Feb. 22, 2022. Of the CNMI's eligible population, 56% have already received an additional dose. The vaccination rate is calculated using the 2020 Census population estimates for the CNMI and includes the eligible 5-years-old and older population.

A total of 610 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Feb. 21, 2022:

■ 395 via Community-Based Testing

■ 178 at Koblerville COVID-19 Community Center

■ 20 at Tinian Health Center

■ 17 at Rota Health Center

Yesterday's Guam Joint Information Center quoted Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero as saying: "To his family and those who loved him, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], [Lt. Gov.] Josh [Tenorio], and I offer our deepest sympathies and condolences. Our elderly and our sick remain vulnerable to this virus. Now, more than ever, we must pay extra attention to our loved ones and their health and wellness. Get tested and know your status if you are feeling sick or you feel you may have been exposed. The sooner you get tested, the earlier you can take action and preserve life." ***(Saipan Tribune/PR)***

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WHO

From Page 1

in the last week, marking the third consecutive week that COVID-19 cases have dropped, the World Health Organization said Tuesday.

In the U.N. health agency's weekly pandemic report, WHO said there were more than 12 million new coronavirus infections last week. The number of new COVID-19 deaths fell 8% to about 67,000 worldwide, the first time that weekly deaths have fallen since early January.

The Western Pacific was the only region that saw an increase in COVID-19 cases, with a 29% jump, while the number of infections elsewhere dropped significantly. The number of new deaths also rose in the Western Pacific and Africa while falling everywhere else. The highest number of new COVID-19 cases were seen in Russia, Germany, Brazil, the U.S. and South Korea.

WHO said omicron remains the overwhelmingly dominant variant worldwide, accounting for more than 99% of sequences shared with the world's biggest virus database. It said delta was the only other variant of significance, which comprised fewer than 1% of shared sequences.

WHO also reported that available vaccine evidence shows that "booster vaccination substantially improves (vaccine effectiveness)," against the omicron variant, but said more details are still needed on how long such protection lasts.

The agency had previously said there was no proof that boosters were necessary for healthy people and pleaded with rich countries not to offer third doses to their people before sharing them with poorer countries.

Health officials have noted that omicron causes milder disease than previous COVID-19 variants and in countries with high vaccination rates, omicron has spread widely but COVID-19 hospitalization and death rates have not increased substantially.

Scientists, however, warn that it's still possible that more transmissible and deadly variants of COVID-19 could still emerge if the virus is allowed to spread uncontrolled.

WHO's Europe chief Dr. Hans Kluge says the region is now entering a "plausible endgame" for the virus and said there is now a "singular opportunity" for authorities to end the acute phase of the pandemic.

This week, Britain announced it would scrap all remaining COVID-19 restrictions, including the requirement for people with the illness to self-isolate, even as Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged there could be future deadly variants of the virus. Earlier this month, Sweden abandoned wide-scale testing for COVID-19 even in people with symptoms, saying that testing costs and the expense of its pandemic restrictions were "no longer justifiable."

Hong Kong's leader, meanwhile, announced Tuesday that the city will test its entire population of 7.5 million people for COVID-19 three times in March as it grapples with its worst outbreak yet, driven by the highly contagious omicron variant.

■■■

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-047

Opening Date: February 23, 2022
Closing Date: March 8, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Purchasing Technician**
DEPARTMENT:	**COA/Procurement & Supply**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$22,865.00 to $30,867.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the general supervision of the Purchasing Administrator or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Procurement & Supply Division.

Duties:

- Purchasing records maintenance; purchase order processing; preparing voucher reports, performing data entry; processing quotations; and assisting with vendor relationship management.
- Receives purchase requisition vouchers for materials, parts and/or services and reviews vouchers for complete information and authorization.
- Determines and contacts vendors by phone or sends requests for quotations to vendors via email or fax; monitors due dates for quotations; reviews quotations upon receipt; awards small purchase bids based on lowest cost, lead time, availability, requirements, vendor support and payment terms.
- Processes and distributes purchase orders and related correspondence; enters and updates system records; prepares justification documentation for vendor selection and bid awards; organizes and maintains files and records.
- Monitors and follows up on purchase orders and payment schedules; works with accounts payable on prepayment requirements.
- Coordinates pick-up and delivery of materials, parts and/or services with internal and external customers.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.
Experience: Four (4) years of experience related to purchasing.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Record keeping methods; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Reviewing documents for completion and appropriate authorization; contacting vendors to gather purchase quotation information; Reviewing quotations for specific criteria and awarding bids for small purchases; Processing and distributing purchase orders and related documents; Updating and maintaining purchase data in system; Monitoring schedules and due dates; Organizing and maintain files and records; Coordinating service deliveries; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Sole-source procurement, changing COVID-19 protocols are questioned

The CNMI House of Representatives Health and Welfare Committee was briefed by the COVID-19 Task Force Tuesday, Feb. 15, about the Commonwealth's evolving pandemic response, sole-source purchasing concerns, and long-term plans for the CNMI's healthcare system.

Led by House Health and Welfare chair Rep. Christina Sablan (D-Saipan), the meeting included updates from Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muna, CNMI COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez, governor's authorized representative Patrick Guerrero, CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management special assistant Gerald Deleon Guerrero, the Public School System's Family and Community Engagement Program manager Liela Yumul, and Department of Corrections Commissioner Wally Villagomez.

"Since the committee's last briefing with the task force, there's been a surge in COVID-19 cases between the delta and omicron variants, including a spike in infections affecting our public schools as well as staff and inmates at the Department of Corrections," said Sablan.

Among the highlights of the briefing was what Sablan described as the exorbitant costs of sanitization at the correctional facility in Susupe.

"It was a revelation that the Department of Corrections spent over $257,000 on sanitization services provided by one company in just 17 days, and nobody on the panel could recall the last date of service, or who is providing sanitization currently," Sablan said. "To put that amount in perspective, the entire CHCC facility is apparently sanitized for $30,000 per month. The entire legislative building has been sanitized for $1,600 in a day." ***(PR)***

23rd Taste of the Marianas in June

The 23rd Annual Taste of the Marianas International Food Festival & Beer Garden will be held in June on Saipan, featuring two weekends of some the destination's best cuisine and entertainment

The Taste of the Marianas is organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority and is usually held during May Tourism Month. However, overall low visitor arrivals this year are expected to receive a boost in June during the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games, prompting the MVA to schedule this year's festival over two consecutive weekends, on June 17, 18, 19, 25, and 26.

"Taste of the Marianas is one of the most highly anticipated festivals of the year, and our team is working diligently to make this year another great success for visitors, residents, and vendors," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "In cooperation with the Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games Organizing Committee, we have agreed to hold the festival during the Games to give the athletes and their entourages a true taste of the best the Marianas has to offer in terms of taste, entertainment, and island hospitality."

The annual signature event of the MVA will feature affordable dishes from local hotels and restaurants, live entertainment, and arts and crafts sales. The venue, vendor registration information, and other details will be announced once confirmed.

For more information, contact MVA Community Projects specialist Ray Villagomez at rvillagomez@mymarians.com or 664-.3200.

The MVA will also host the 20th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Tinian on March 11-13, 2022. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-049

Opening Date: February 18, 2022
Closing Date: March 4, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$20,826.00 to $28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility;
- Provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures;
- Provide assistance in monitoring and complying with regulatory compliance;
- Operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility;
- Identifies issues and operational concerns;
- Performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions.
- Receives customer inquiries and trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates.
- Monitors inventory and supplies; maintains required supply levels; initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas.
- Takes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders and data; and prepares reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma (GED), or Adult Basic Education Program Adult School Diploma (AS) and four (4) years of experience related to area of assignment.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in:Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work in assigned area; Reviewing quality levels and providing technical guidance in assigned area;
Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Monitoring inventory and supplies; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
  - o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
  - o Trades Licenses and/or certifications, based on assignment.
  - o Water/Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Certifications, based on assignment.
- **Physical Demands:**
  - o Occasional lifting of objects; Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday and Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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WANTED: GRAPHIC ARTIST

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

is looking for a full-time graphic artist.

The ideal candidate must know how to use InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator; can work fast and is able to work in a deadline-oriented environment; must be quick to grasp instructions; and must be able to create ad designs, concepts, and layouts based on knowledge of layout principles and esthetic design concepts.

Supercharge your graphic design career by learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing!

Email your application and résumé to Mia Carreon at mia_carreon@tanholdings.com or drop them off at the HR office on the second floor of the JP Center building in Garapan, Saipan.

5 WEEKS AFTER BIG ERUPTION

Tonga's internet is finally restored

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Tonga's main internet connection to the rest of the world has finally been restored more than five weeks after a huge volcanic eruption and tsunami severed a crucial undersea cable.

Three people in Tonga were killed by the Jan. 15 tsunami, dozens of homes were destroyed and drinking water was tainted.

The fiber-optic cable is now fully operational again after being reconnected Tuesday, said Samiuela Fonua, the chairperson at Tonga Cable Ltd., the state-owned company that owns the cable.

"It's a huge relief when you know things have come to the end and are working well," Fonua told The Associated Press. "It's one step forward for the country."

Fonua said the crew aboard a repair ship replaced about 90 kilometers (56 miles) of cable that had been damaged by the tsunami. His company didn't have enough spare cable, Fonua added, and needed to borrow some from other companies.

The fix means that Tonga Cable can now focus on repairing a second severed cable that connects some of the outer islands to the main island, Fonua said. That cable runs close to the undersea volcano.

Fonua said that entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX company had also been helping restore connections through its network of low-orbit satellites called Starlink.

Fonua said his company had been testing the satellite connections this week and they had been working well. He said that now the main cable was restored, he hoped the SpaceX connections could be used for reconnecting people on some of the outer islands.

Officials in neighboring Fiji said SpaceX had established a station there to help restore connections in Tonga.

Tonga has also been grappling with its first outbreak of the coronavirus, which may have been brought in by foreign military crews aboard ships and planes delivering vital aid after the eruption.

The outbreak has grown to more than 250 cases but so far there have been no reported deaths. The country of 105,000 has begun easing some virus restrictions after initially imposing a lockdown.

Tongan health officials say that 90% of people aged 12 and over have had at least two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514 | Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
Tels: (670) 234-9447, 234-6866, 234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2022

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **through the** Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated** $1,514,000.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $970,416.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); $463,940.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, $79,644.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2022.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of persons. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

You may access the CPD applications on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "Public Notice/Announcement" menu tab, beginning February 03, 2022.

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Applicants); NMC Campus, Building A (Tinian Applicants); and, Songsong Village, Rota (Rota Applicants) by ***May 04, 2022, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after May 04, 2022, will not be accepted.***

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations concerning the usage of CPD funds.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

March 14, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Saipan
March 15, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Tinian
March 16, 2022, 6:00 p.m. for the island of Rota

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office in San Jose Village; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided.

Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 234-9447.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-050

Opening Date: February 18, 2022
Closing Date: March 4, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician Senior**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$24,096.00 - $32,529.00 per annum, Non-Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Water Division.

Duties:
- May serve as a crew leader to include assigning and monitoring work and providing technical direction.
- Prepares training information and materials for an assigned technical training program for trades staff.
- Performs skilled/certified level operations, in-field installations and/or repairs in assigned service areas.
- Inspects equipment and determines if any repairs are needed.
- Performs preventative maintenance in assigned service areas.
- Assists with maintaining sufficient level of supplies and equipment.
- Generally, is responsible for: Maintaining operating reservoirs and distribution valves; monitoring reservoir level abd water pressure levels;
- Maintaining water wells, booster stations and reservoir stations;
- Responding to customer complaints;
- May serve in lead role installing, maintaining and repairing water lines;
- Monitoring chlorine gas in the water system;
- Maintaining and repairing motors, pumps and other related equipment;
- Gathering water samples;
- Installing and/or replacing water meters; Performing disconnects and reconnects;
- Bleeding fire hydrants;
- Preparing daily progress reports.
- Assures all materials and field activities are in accordance with all applicable standards, codes, specifications and regulations.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma (GED), or Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program Adult School Diploma (AS). Level 2 certification for water distribution (or ability to obtain within one year), and 3 years of skilled experience related to area of assignment.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work in assigned area; Reviewing quality levels and providing technical guidance in assigned area; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Monitoring inventory and supplies; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing:
- Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.
- Trades Licenses and/or Certifications, based on assignment
- Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Certifications, based on assignment.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-051

Opening Date: February 11, 2022
Closing Date: February 25, 2022

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Assistant, Operator**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 - $22,602.00 per annum, Non - Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Three (3)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:
- The Trades Assistant-Operator assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks.
- Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities;
- Monitoring Plant systems as assigned;
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection;
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used;
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete;
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports;
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities;
- Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting;
- Operating incinerators; oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters;
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Must Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work. Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

- **Licensing:**
  - o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response.
All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday (Except Legal Holidays), 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Remington settlement sends message that victims have rights, too

For decades, gun industry defenders have advanced the myth that guns don't kill people. Sure, a gun sitting in a locked case doesn't kill anyone, but a human brandishing one or more military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines can kill far more people, far quicker than if that person didn't have a gun at all. Guns enable people to kill people in America by margins unmatched in any other developed nation. A major lawsuit settlement Tuesday could help put a dent in those margins.

The families of adults and children slain in 2012 at Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School reached a $73 million settlement with representatives of arms maker Remington, which manufactured the military-style weaponry used to kill 20 first graders and six adults. The sickest lingering aftereffect of the killings a full decade later involves the way gun makers and the National Rifle Association persist in turning this tragedy and the parents' suffering into a celebration of gun rights.

Which is why Tuesday's settlement is so significant. Gun victims are finally standing up for their rights instead of leaving unchallenged the way mass-killing devices are marketed as a statement of manhood and Second Amendment preservation. Gun makers' mission is not about the Constitution. It's about maximizing profits. And they do it by advertising guns using macho, military imagery and associating assault rifles with patriotism and the defense of liberty.

Tuesday's settlement shot a big hole through that nonsense. The families who lost loved ones in the 2012 massacre were limited by federal law from holding Remington liable for the bloodshed its product caused. But nine families tried a different tactic: challenging the way Remington appealed to insecure young men with advertisements like, "Consider your man card reissued."

The lawsuit led to challenges all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which refused to hear the case and tacitly affirmed that the lawsuit's contention was legitimate. Gun industry representatives argued that there was no proof such marketing campaigns had any bearing on the deranged shooter's actions. It was the shooter's mother who purchased the weapons, and he killed her before going on the school rampage. So it's a fair question whether marketing had any influence on the tragedy.

Nevertheless, the families who filed the lawsuit made a strong enough case that Remington's insurers felt it best to settle than to risk fighting it out in court. After the Sandy Hook shooting, Remington was inundated with lawsuits and filed for bankruptcy. Predictably, the gun industry is trying to argue that since insurers made the settlement decision, this outcome doesn't represent any kind of concession by firearms makers themselves.

Of course not. The industry remains just as irrational as ever in its defense of mass-killing machines and the mass marketing behind them. If more lawsuits succeed like this one, though, gun makers can soon consider their bankruptcy cards reissued.

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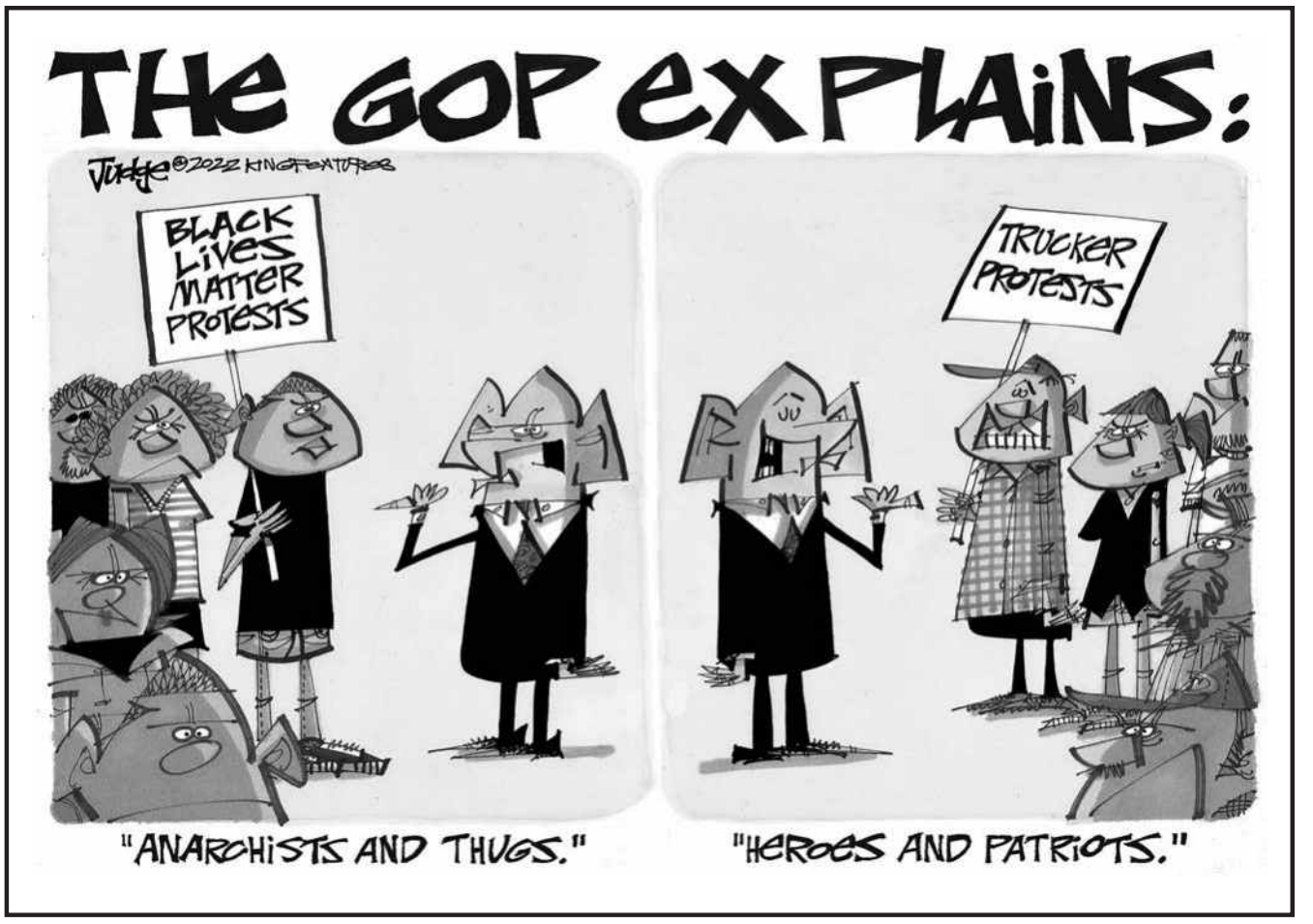


Sin in America

By WILLIAM FRENCH
Chicago Tribune

William French is an associate professor of theology at Loyola University Chicago with an emphasis on environmental sustainability, global security, environmental ethics, and war and peace studies.

Talk of sin once played a significant role in colonial America and across much of our history. As America continues to face a crisis of political polarization and a threat to our democracy, perhaps revisiting the traditional religious understanding of the dynamics of sin might be helpful for offering some insight into our country's current plight.

Across the last few years of former President Donald Trump's campaigns and presidency, the nation has been forced to consider what legal and constitutional categories help us name certain of his acts, his phone calls and his disregard for the well-being of our country.

The Mueller investigation enshrined terms such as "collusion" with Russia and "obstruction of justice" even as it landed with a thud. The first impeachment charged that Trump "corruptly solicited" Ukraine's government to find dirt to hurt Joe Biden's election chances. The second impeachment charged that his actions before and on Jan. 6 constituted an "incitement to insurrection" at the Capitol.

We have learned a lot about "high crimes and misdemeanors," the "Emoluments Clauses" in the Constitution, the Hatch Act stating that federal employees—say those working in the White House—may not engage in partisan political campaign work and the law holding that all presidential documents must be preserved.

The problem with the process of bringing to justice Trump and his close set of advisers and enablers is that it is too narrowly Trump-centered, too tied up in technical legal categories and painfully too slow. America's core problem is not Trump, but rather in the failures of courage and basic care for the nation of all those who continue to enable Trump's goals and his lies.

The category of sin—a traditional religious category—offers an important breadth of focus on patterns of moral negligence and selfish behavior. For many, talk of sin has fallen in disfavor. For nonreligious people, it sounds too churchy. Even for many religious folks, it sounds unhelpfully judgmental and conservative.

Sin talk, for many, seems to refer to a convenient and often conservatively framed checklist of moral "do nots": don't have an abortion, don't be gay, don't be a liberal or a socialist, don't teach critical race theory or make students uncomfortable when they hear the truth about the complex history of our nation.

The notion of sin actually across many religious traditions is a critically powerful and expansive category for thinking through fundamental human propensities to place self-interest over the common good, and to ignore long-term mounting threats to the common good.

Sin, to most today, sounds like it is centered in a negative view of human nature. But a recognition of the shared common human capacity of sinfulness most often has served to prompt religious practices of humility and of practices of "examinations of conscience."

The classic understanding of sin holds that it is a contraction of love, care and concern into a tight circle of self-interest and care only for one's immediate family or one's own defined group. It is not an expansive command to love all neighbors, strangers and even enemies, but a constricting energy to prioritize a constricted attention and care for self, family and any who one defines as "us."

This selfish energy blinds us to the needs and interests of others beyond our circle even as it blocks any caring much about the next generation. Sin names the process of the "corruption of conscience" that occurs as we are pulled by egoism to constrict our moral care and concern only to me and mine. This mobilizes a distortion of the ordering of our highest values and concerns, what religious people might call a corrupted prioritization of loves.

The preamble to the Constitution proclaims an expansive range of care and values on which the nation was founded: "We the people ... union ... justice ... domestic tranquility ... the common defense … the general welfare ... the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." Our presidents, senators, representatives and cabinet secretaries all take an oath of office to protect the constitution and accordingly these national values. Many seem to have had their fingers crossed.

George Washington in his farewell address warned us of the danger of "party enthusiasm" that prioritizes immediate interests in election victory over the overall common good of the nation. Washington worried that the powerful drives for party victories prioritize short-term private interests over the long-range commitment to the common good and that of our posterity, our next generations.

Washington does not use sin-language of a "corruption of conscience" pushed by egoism or of a distorted prioritization of loves, but that is the core of his analysis.

Trump is not America's main threat. His political future and standing could easily have been ended by a few more Republican senators at his second impeachment. Our main threat lies in the calculations of political self-interest of the range of Republican leaders who gave Trump a pass.

Our key threat is the wide range across our society who feel pumped up in enabling Trump and Trumpism and in ignoring the mounting national and global threats posed by climate disruption in the coming decades.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Virtues and Vices Sonnet Series Continues

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

I am continuing my series of sonnets on Thirteen Virtues found in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography. On the subject of Chastity. Franklin wrote, "Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation." I was also inspired by French writer La Rochefoucauld (b.1613 - d.1680) who wrote "Our virtues are usually only vices in disguise."

The Audacity of Chastity

Chastity today seems like an old-fashioned virtue
for some folks, monks, and nuns it's not old-fashioned
take multiple partners and chastity will desert you
while promiscuity goes hand in glove with passion
many religious orders take lifetime vows of celibacy
and live lives of meditation and constant prayer
their critics say this is abnormal and fanatic lunacy
and that there is no need to shave your head bare

In the 21st century it's difficult to practice chastity
to try to stay chaste and pure you will need audacity
to remain a virgin or practice maintaining marital fidelity
and have a grasp of your physical and mental reality
avoid the pitfalls of popular lax social confluence
of hormones—keep thoughts of chastity in pursuance.

Promiscuity in Perpetuity

"What we take for virtues are often a collection of different acts and personal interests pieced together by chance or our own ingenuity and it is not always because of valor or chastity that men are valiant or women chaste."

—La Rochefoucauld

Promiscuity is an ancient centuries old vice
when time and temperature seem to jump and jive
involving sexual exploration and some spice
when action between partners bodies come alive
some say prostitution is the world's oldest profession
I believe it was preceded by the vice promiscuity
the truth be known by those honest in confession
sex with many partners has been practiced in perpetuity

If this seems intended hope you're not offended
will it be disregarded, thrown out, or upended
will cross swearing about it be extended
most obstinate minds will never be bended
hopefully any old friendships are mended
and new friendships are nurtured and tended.

The killing of 6 Asian women in Atlanta rocked me. I know where that animus comes from

By TIFFANY FANG
Chicago Tribune

Tiffany Fang is a second-generation Chinese American who researches the impact of racism and how to cope with it. Fang is a psychotherapist and current doctoral student in counseling psychology at Loyola University Chicago.

One year ago, six Asian women were killed by a white gunman in Atlanta. They were working. He could not deal with his unwanted sexual fantasies. So he killed them.

I was working late that night and saw the news when I glanced at my phone. A tingling sensation ran up and down my limbs, with all the blood rushing to my organs. This happens when we sense a threat, and our body kicks into fight or flight mode. Most people don't know that there is actually a third response—freeze. When we freeze, our body mimics death. This is advantageous because no predator wants to eat something they didn't kill. It might contain decay or sickness. To make sure it doesn't kill you, you have to be the one to kill it.

For weeks I felt tingly when I went outside. I live close to Chicago's Chinatown and worried someone might shoot it up. My grandma has lived there since my family immigrated in the 1980s, and my parents attend the large Chinese church. I knew that if something happened, it would be to someone connected to me. I worried because the names of the women who were killed sounded a lot like my grandma's name and the names of the women in my parents' Bible study.

Two days after the shooting, my partner and I attended a vigil in Chicago's Albany Park. It felt like a funeral. The haunting beat of the drums, candles that flickered across the photos of the deceased. Afterward, we decided to get dinner at Cho Sun Ok, a nearby Korean restaurant. As we walked up to the entrance, a former colleague of mine was on her way out. We exchanged pleasantries, and she asked what we were up to. I told her that we had just come from the vigil. I still remember the confused look in her eyes, her furrowed brow as she filed through recent news in her mind. We used to be close.

There was a lot of love among us Asian American women. We checked in with each other. There wasn't much to say. We all knew. We've had sexualized racism sown into our lives from the very beginning. From the old white man who told 12-year-old me that he would "climb me like a tree," to my high school friends' obsession with my hairless forearms, to checking whether the white guy I was seeing had yellow fever and dated a string of Asian women before me. "Memoirs of a Geisha," one of the only mainstream movies with an Asian female lead, told the story of a poor Japanese woman who entertained men with her sexuality and sold her virginity to the highest bidder before a patron raped her.

These were the seeds of what happened in Atlanta. And suddenly, I saw what was sown in my life for what they could become. I did not feel safe.

What hurt the most was how some people responded. Some were silent until my partner reached out and told them they really should consider texting me. Some responded by sending "thoughts and prayers." I know they meant well, but I felt frustrated. What happened to these women, to me, is violent. And these texts are too nice. These people seemed like they were scared and wanting to keep emotional distance without admitting it. I was scared, and I did not have the option to keep an emotional distance. I wanted to scream: What do you think about this? Do you wonder if I've ever experienced something like this? What if "letting you know if I need anything" feels like I need to give you a step-by-step advocacy plan, and hell, I'm still in shock?

These relationships were not as strong as I thought. They could support me if I had to replan my wedding during the pandemic, but not if I felt scared that someone might hurt me. I did not realize I would feel so disappointed. That was a surprise. I learned to accept their limitations. I looked for support elsewhere.

One year later and I refuse to see us as two-dimensional, as society would have it. I will not expect us to move through our lives as if we are without history.

Until you are ready to make space in your imaginations for the magnificence of Asian American women in our fullness, we will be here, getting it done, finding a way, spinning an abundance of love.

Biden can't embrace COVID normality

By RICH LOWRY
King Features Synd., Inc.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

Joe Biden was the candidate of normality who hasn't been able to deliver it, particularly on the pandemic.

This is not entirely his fault, obviously. He didn't create the delta and omicron surges, nor did he—or most anyone else—foresee that the vaccines wouldn't prevent infections as advertised.

On COVID, though, as on much else, he has been trapped by a commitment to his political base and by a reflexive opposition to everything associated with Donald Trump into an endless emergency posture that isn't wearing well with time.

Everyone agrees now—after the flameouts of initial efforts to pass Build Back Better and of the attempt to trash the Senate filibuster—that Biden needs a political reset. His looming Supreme Court pick will presumably provide a much-needed win, but is unlikely to move the needle much. It's on the pandemic that Biden has, in theory, an opportunity to change course in a significant way.

By more fully embracing an approach geared to living with COVID and returning to normality, Biden could usefully play against type, align himself with shifting public opinion, and acknowledge the reality of the third year of the pandemic when vaccines and boosters are easily available to anyone who wants them.

Even the thought of such a tack would, once upon a time, have elicited charges of intolerable recklessness. In certain quarters, it still does. But the public is moving in this direction. A new Monmouth poll found that 70% of the public agrees with the statement that "it's time we accept that COVID is here to stay and we just need to get on with our lives."

Unsurprisingly, 89% of Republicans agree with that view. But so do 71% of independents and nearly half of Democrats.

An NBC News poll on the schools found the same kind of partisan splits. According to the survey, 65% of people were most worried about kids falling behind academically and only 30% most worried about stopping the spread of COVID. Again, Republicans and independents were strongly on one side—87% and 66% most worried lost learning—and Democrats divided, with 43% worried about kids losing academic ground.

In a big Kaiser Family Foundation survey, 51% of Democrats described the pandemic as the biggest problem facing the country, whereas only 28% of independents did and 19% of Republicans.

This suggests that the response to COVID is beginning to become a wedge issue—Democrats can play to their base, which is most invested in maintaining restrictions, only at the risk of alienating the broader electorate.

Biden, whose handling of COVID is less and less popular, shows signs of being conflicted. The White House counseled against panic at the outset of the omicron surge, and even talked of a declaration of independence from the virus last summer. But the president hasn't been able to make it unmistakable that he thinks we've entered a new phase in the pandemic. As the heterodox center-left writer Matthew Yglesias points out, the Biden administration may believe that it has embraced normality but what it's really done is only make "the most extreme public health people mad at them."

If the administration wants to make a statement, it could decisively turn against the teacher unions on the issue of keeping schools open, siding with parents and kids over a Democratic interest group. It could relax its indefensibly sweeping guidance on school masking and instantly pave the way for local school districts to lift their mandates. It could end the federal mask mandates on travel.

But any of these measures would mean crossing progressives; enduring the scolding of one-dimensional public-health experts; and courting comparisons to Donald Trump, or even worse, Glenn Youngkin and Ron DeSantis.

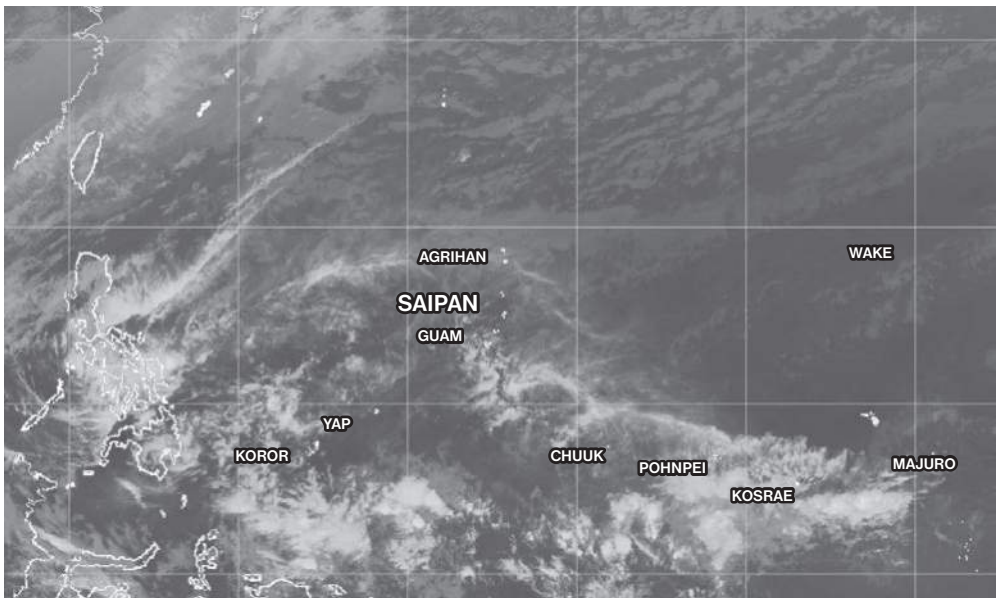
And so President Biden, as conditions change, can't change with them, putting normality on indefinite hold.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly sunny. Scattered showers in the morning, then isolated showers in the afternoon.	Breezy during the day. Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. East to northeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
86º 77º	85º 76	86º 75º	86º 75º	85º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:52 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY. 23, 2022

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar shows the trailing edge of last night`s showers trekking through Guam and Rota this morning. Farther north, satellite shows a shear line just north and northeast of Saipan and Tinian. Fresh to strong trade winds and combined seas of 9 to 11 feet continue.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	30 / 25 °F
Palau	Thunderstorms	28 / 25 °F
Yap	PM Thunderstorms	29 / 26 °F
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	30 / 27 °F
Pohnpei	PM Thunderstorms	30 / 26 °F
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	30 / 27 °F
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	29 / 26 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	06:37 AM	18:23 PM
Friday	06:36 AM	18:23 PM
Saturday	06:36 AM	18:23 PM
Sunday	06:35 AM	18:24 PM
Monday	06:35 AM	18:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	00:20	11:55 PM	-
Friday	01:22	12:51 PM	-
Saturday	02:26	13:51 PM	-
Sunday	03:29	14:55 PM	-
Monday	04:28	15:59 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	26 / 16 °F
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	26 / 16 °F
Hong Kong	MMostly Sunny	16 / 12 °F
Honolulu	Sunny	28 / 21 °F
London	AM Light Rain	8 / 4°F
Los Angeles	Sunny	17 / 5 °F
Manila	Partly Cloudy	33 / 25 °F
Melbourne	Rain	22 / 17 °F
Miami	Mostly Sunny	26 / 22 °F
New York	Cloudy	3 / 1°F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	7 / -1 °F
Paris	PM Light Rain	12 / 3 °F
Busan	Sunny	9 / -1 °F
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	17 / 5 °F
Salem	Partly Cloudy	26 / 17 °F
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	13 / 4 °F
Seoul	Sunny	1 / 11 °F
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	9 / -1°F
Washington, DC	Cloudy	20 / 3 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
02:01 AM	High Tide	1.40
06:57 AM	Low Tide	0.03
12:33 PM	High Tide	1.71
8:19 PM	Low Tide	0.12

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

■ Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.

■ Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.

■ Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

• Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

• Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:20am	8:05am	2, 4, 6
UA117	9:50am	10:35am	1, 3, 5, 7

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	6:30am	8:20am	1, 3, 5
UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:20am	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via Guam
UA117/183	9:50am	9:50pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

7C3406	3:10PM	6:55PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9308	3:30PM	7:20PM	4, 7
OZ6243	4:00PM	7:40PM	3, 6

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

BX621	3:10PM	6:30PM	7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA116	5:30am	6:16am	2, 4, 6
UA116	8:00am	8:46am	7
UA174	8:00am	8:46am	1, 3, 5

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	2, 4, 7
UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	2, 5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/116	10:40pm	6:16am+1	5 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	8:46am+1	2 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	6:16am+1	1, 3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:46am+1	4, 7 via Guam
UA184/116	10:55pm	8:46am+1	6 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3405	8:30AM	2:10PM	Every 4 days (Jan 29-Mar 30)
TW9307	9:00AM	Q2:30PM	4, 7
OZ6233	9:00AM	2:30PM	3, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

BX622	8:00AM	1:10PM	7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Daily
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Daily
1303	1:30PM	2:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1304	3:30PM	4:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Daily
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Daily
3103	1:30PM	3:00PM	Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3104	4:30PM	5:00PM	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Daily
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Daily
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

House rejects Senate proposal on retirees' bonuses

The CNMI House of Representatives unanimously rejected Tuesday a Senate proposal that sought to grant Gov. Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres 100% reprogramming authority as a condition to fund bonuses for CNMI retirees.

House Bill 22-91, HD1, SS1 failed by a vote of 20-0, and will go into conference.

House Speaker Edmund Villagomez appointed House Ways and Means chair Rep. Donald Manglona (Ind-Rota), committee vice chair Corina Magofna (D-Saipan) and vice speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (Ind-Saipan) as conferees for the House. The House Ways and Means committee stands ready to preside over the matter once Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider appoints his respective conferees.

Manglona pre-filed bipartisan H.B. 22-95, which allocates the initial $1.3 million identified in H.B. 22-91 from provisions that were originally passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate but line-item vetoed by the governor. The updated bonus includes an additional $1.3 million reappropriated from the governor's discretionary account, the Office of the Governor and the Department of Finance to effectively double the previously proposed bonus for CNMI retirees, with $2.6 million specifically identified local funds.

CNMI retirees were initially promised bonus payments from the Executive Branch when Gov. Ralph DLG Torres announced his plan for a Christmas Bonus in a December 2021 media briefing.

The Planning and Budgeting Act, Title 1, section 7402 of the Commonwealth Code provides the governor 25% reprogramming authority. Manglona said that even with the doubled bonus proposal, the $2.6 million identified in HB 22- 95 falls well within the scope of the governor's reprogramming powers.

A week ago, Finance Secretary David Atalig confirmed the governor could have allocated the $500 retirement bonus through his reprogramming authority back in December if he approached the Legislature to establish a business unit. Atalig also confirmed the governor could have approved the $1,000 bonus because he had $2.6 million in reprogrammable funds available to him.

"Rather than give the bonuses, Gov. Torres instead decided to manipulate our counterparts in the Senate and chose to use our retirees as pawns in a cheap political stunt to regain 100% reprogramming authority," Manglona said. "He can blame the House leadership as much as he likes but we identified the specific business units and specific dollar amounts to fund the bonus for our retirees, not once but twice."

In January, the CNMI Senate delayed the bonus payments when they amended H.B. 22-91 to double the proposed bonus without the proper identification of a specific funding source. The Senate version also granted Torres 100% reprogramming authority from his current legally authorized limit of 25%.

"When our counterparts in the Senate proposed that we double the bonus, they once again failed to identify the source of the funds in a veiled attempt to grant the governor 100% reprogramming authority of the limited resources in our general fund," Manglona said. "H.B. 22-95 provides our community the transparency mandated in the previous election by clearly identifying the specific business units and specific dollar amounts that will fund the bonuses."

Governor, Senate yet to act on new round of CNMI economic impact payments

In January, the House unanimously passed House Joint Resolution 22-12 to strongly encourage and endorse the issuance of a new local stimulus payment of $500 per resident and $500 per dependent. ***(PR)***

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

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PATRICK H. SAN NICOLAS, Chairman · CHARLENE M. LIZAMA, Vice Chairman · JAMES M. MENDIOLA, Member · DONALD M. HOFSCHNEIDER, Acting Executive Director

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold its Regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda
- d. Adoption of Minutes
  - i. January 25, 2022 (rescheduled to February 1, 2022); Regular Meeting

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. REPORTS
- a. Chair's Report
- b. Executive Director's Report

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
- a. Casino Service Industry
  - i. United States Playing Card Company
- b. Casino License
  - i. Status Update of Bridge Investment Group/Tinian Diamond Casino

V. NEW BUSINESS

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

[1]Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.
[2] PPursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairperson of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the Special Board Meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 25, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. at the NMHC Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance. In compliance with the CNMI COVID-19 guidelines, Face-masks must be worn, social distancing will be enforced, and not more than ten (10) people will be allowed in the conference room during the course of the meeting.

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Review & Approval of NMHC FY2023 Budget

III. OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

V. ADJOURNMENT

(Notes: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13 (a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/

Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairperson of the Board

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds
02/23/2022

Final Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain

This is to give notice that **Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)** has determined that the following proposed **Beach Road Improvement Phase III & IV project** under the **Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program grant number B-19-DV-69-0001 and B-19-DV-69-002** is located in the **100-year floodplain**. NMHC has identified and evaluated practicable alternatives to the proposed action in the floodplain and the potential impacts on the **floodplain** from the proposed action, as required by **Executive Order 11988**, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The proposed project(s) is located on **Route 33, Beach Road, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.**

The public may view the full description of the project and provide comments by visiting the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the public notice/announcement tab and selecting the Environmental Review Records or you may visit the NMHC CDBG-DR website at https://www.cnmicdbgdr.com.

Written comments must be received by NMHC on or before March 14, 2022. A minimum 15 calendar day comment period will begin the day after the publication and end on the 16th day after the publication. Written comments may also be submitted through the following methods: email at nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp; or facsimile to 1-670-234-9021; or hand deliver to the NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan. Attention CDBG-DR Project Division.

/s/
Ralph DLG. Torres
Governor, CNMI

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP22-DCCA-CCDF-42200077

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 23, 2022 TIME: 9:00 A.M.

"TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT FOR CCDF'S FAMILY CHILD CARE PROGRAM, INCLUDING LICENSE-EXEMPT FAMILY, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR (LEFFN) AND LICENSED HOME-BASED PROVIDERS"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE HORIGUCHI BLDG., GROUND FLOOR, 123 KOPPA DI ORU & BEACH ROAD, GARAPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A MANDATORY PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD. DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, CCDF WILL CONDUCT THE PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE VIRTUALLY AT **1:30 P.M.** ON **MARCH 11, 2022**. THE CALENDAR INVITE AND LINK WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CCDF OFFICE USING THE EMAIL PROVIDED BY THE PROPOSER TO PROCUREMENT.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO **MS. MARIBEL S.D. LOSTE, PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**, VIA EMAIL TO mloste.cnmiccdf@gmail.com OR VIA FACSIMILE TO **(670) 664-2547 NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON MARCH 4, 2022.** ALL QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROPOSERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JOSEPH P. DELEON GUERRERO
SECRETARY, DCCA

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board meeting** on Friday, **February 25, 2022** at **10:00 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered and public attendance is welcome

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Reading of the Notice of the Agenda
- D. Adoption of Agenda

II. Public Comments*

III. Discussion
- A. Repatriation Costs
- B. 8-Hour Annual Leave for Hard to Fill Positions
- C. Telesource Contract
- D. In-House Legal Counsel
- E. CUC Training Division
- F. Renewable Energy Division
- G. Covid-19 Update

IV. Executive Session**

V. Announcements

VI. Adjournment

_____/s/_____
MIRANDA V. MANGLONA, Chairwoman

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** All interested persons are welcome to attend, and submit written and oral testimony on the above-agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes
*** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, in consultation with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSING
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Pursuant to P. L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Board of Professional Licensing (BPL) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its quarterly board meeting on ***Friday, February 25, 2022, at 9:00a.m.*** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Governor's Office Conference Room, Capitol Hill, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes - (from October 06, 2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairman's Report
VII. Director's Report
- Financial Report
- FY2023 Budget Call
- Upcoming National Council Meetings

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
- A. Governor's Office
- B. Legislature

X. Old Business
- Update on the Appraisal Regulations Ad Hoc Committee

XI. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with counsel with pending or anticipated legal matters.
XII. New Business
XIII. Applications for Board's Review
XIV. Miscellaneous Business
XV. Announcements
- A. Next Meeting Date
- B. Adjournment of Meeting

Business

West imposes sanctions for Russia actions on Ukraine

BRUSSELS (AP)—Responding swiftly to Russian President Vladimir Putin's order sending troops to separatist regions of Ukraine, world leaders hit back with non-military actions Tuesday in hopes of averting a full-blown war in Europe.

Germany made the first big move, taking steps to halt certification of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia — a massive, lucrative project long sought by Moscow but criticized by the U.S. for increasing Europe's reliance on Russian energy supplies.

And in Washington, U.S. President Joe Biden announced financial sanctions on banks and Russian officials close to Putin and their sons as punishment for what he called "the beginning of a Russian invasion of Ukraine." He said the U.S. would impose "full blocking" on two large Russian financial institutions and "comprehensive sanctions" on Russian debt.

"That means we've cut off Russia's government from Western finance," Biden said. "It can no longer raise money from the West and cannot trade in its new debt on our markets or European markets either."

Biden promised that more sanctions would be coming if Putin proceeds further.

The European Union announced sanctions taking aim at the 351 Duma legislators who voted in favor of recognizing separatist regions in Ukraine, as well as 27 other Russian officials and institutions from the defense and banking world. They also sought to limit Moscow's access to EU capital and financial markets.

AP

In this image provided by the United Nations, the U.N. Security Council meets for an emergency session on Ukraine, Monday, Feb. 21, 2022, at the U.N. headquarters.

"This package of sanctions … will hurt Russia and it will hurt a lot," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said after chairing a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Paris.

"We will make it as difficult as possible for the Kremlin to pursue its aggressive policies," said EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Outside the EU, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson named five Russian banks and three wealthy Russian businessmen whom the U.K. hit with sanctions on Tuesday.

Australia on Wednesday said it would align with the U.S. and Britain by targeting two Russian banks. It also imposed sanctions and travel bans on eight members of Putin's Security Council. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said these are a first batch of measures in response to Russian aggression toward Ukraine.

Japan also announced sanctions, with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida saying Wednesday that his government will ban new issuance and distribution of Russian government bonds in Japan. He said Japan will also ban travel by people linked to the two Ukrainian rebel regions and freeze their assets in Japan, and will ban trade with the two areas.

And if Putin pushes farther into Ukraine, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg insisted, "there will be even stronger sanctions, even a higher price to pay."

The U.S. and other Western nations have pressed daily for diplomatic efforts to head off a dangerous military confrontation. But the failure of that effort was underscored Tuesday as Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled plans for a Thursday meeting in Geneva with his Russian counterpart, saying Russia's actions showed there was no point.

PH inks $624M deal for 32 Black Hawks

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippines signed a 32 billion-peso ($624 million) deal Tuesday to purchase 32 Black Hawk helicopters in the largest military aircraft acquisition contract under outgoing President Rodrigo Duterte, defense officials said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana signed the deal with Janusz Zakrecki, president of Poland-based aerospace manufacturer PZL Mielec, to acquire the S-70i Black Hawks, which can be used for troop transport, combat operations and disaster response. The deal includes a training package for pilots and maintenance crews and logistical backup, Department of National Defense spokesperson Arsenio Andolong said.

Lorenzana said it took time for the Department of Budget to allocate funds for the deal, which was signed by Duterte, and he was concerned because the president's six-year term ends on June 30.

"We barely made it," Lorenzana said. "I think we will not be here anymore to receive these helicopters, but nonetheless, we will be happy to see the improvement of the capability of the Philippine air force."

Due to financial constraints, the Philippines has struggled for years to modernize its military, one of the most underfunded in Asia, to deal with decades-long Muslim and communist insurgencies and to defend its territories in the disputed South China Sea.

The acquisition of the Black Hawks will allow the air force to retire its aging Bell UH-1 helicopters, which were used during the Vietnam War. "The Philippine air force is so good at maintaining these helicopters that long. Long after the U.S. has already ditched their Hueys, we are still flying them," Lorenzana said.

The Philippines earlier acquired 16 Black Hawks from PZL Mielec, all of which have been delivered and were used widely to respond to the widespread damage caused by a powerful typhoon in the central Philippines in December, Lorenzana said.

One of the 16 helicopters crashed last year during night flight training in northern Tarlac province, killing six air force personnel, but Lorenzana said it was an "acceptable risk of flying helicopters at night during bad weather."

Nation

Arbery killers are convicted of federal hate crime in his death

AP

This photo combo shows, from left, Travis McMichael, William "Roddie" Bryan, and Gregory McMichael during their trial at at the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick, Ga.

BRUNSWICK, Ga. (AP)—The three white men convicted of murder in Ahmaud Arbery's shooting were found guilty of federal hate crimes Tuesday in a verdict that affirmed what family members and civil rights activists said all along: that he was chased down and killed because he was Black.

The verdict—handed down one day before the second anniversary of Arbery's death on Feb. 23, 2020—was symbolic, coming just months after all three defendants were convicted of murder in a Georgia state court and sentenced to life in prison.

But family and community members viewed the hate crimes trial as an important statement. The case also became part of a larger national reckoning on racial injustice after graphic video of Arbery's killing leaked online.

"Ahmaud will continue to rest in peace. But he will now begin to rest in power," Arbery's mother, Wanda Cooper-Jones, told reporters outside the courthouse.

Arbery's father, Marcus Arbery Sr., bowed his head and shook his fists in quiet celebration as the guilty verdicts were read in the courtroom. He then pressed his hands together in front of his face as if saying a silent prayer.

Arbery Sr. and Cooper-Jones emerged from the courthouse holding hands with their attorney Ben Crump, then raised their clasped hands to cheers from supporters.

But Cooper-Jones did not describe the outcome as a victory.

"We as a family will never get victory because Ahmaud is gone forever," she said.

Arbery Sr. noted that his son used to call every day, even if just to tell his family that he loved them.

"Ahmaud was a kid you can't replace, because of the heart he had," he said. "I'm struggling with that every day," he said. "It hurts me every day."

Defendants Greg and Travis McMichael sat stoically at the defense table as the guilty verdicts were read. When called one-at-a-time before the judge to discuss next steps in their cases, the father and son answered with hushed voices.

The McMichaels and their neighbor, William "Roddie" Bryan, were also found guilty of attempted kidnapping, and the McMichaels were also convicted of the use of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime.

The trial has been taking place simultaneously with that of three former Minneapolis police officers who have been charged with violating the civil rights of George Floyd. Floyd, a Black man, died on May 25, 2020, when then-officer Derek Chauvin pinned him to the ground and pressed a knee to his neck for what authorities say was 9 1/2 minutes. Attorneys began delivering their closing arguments in that case on Tuesday.

Weeks prior to the hate crimes trial in the Arbery killing, the McMichaels had both agreed to enter guilty pleas to the hate crimes in exchange for being able to serve their sentences in federal, rather than state prison. Judge Lisa Godbey Wood rejected the deal, however, saying it would tie her hands at sentencing, and after Arbery's family vehemently opposed it.

"What we got today, we wouldn't have gotten if it wasn't for the fight by the family for Ahmaud," Cooper-Jones said Tuesday, reiterating her anger at Justice Department prosecutors, who she said "chose to ignore the family's cry."

The facts of the case were not disputed during the hate crimes trial. The McMichaels grabbed guns and jumped in a pickup truck to pursue Arbery after seeing him running in their neighborhood outside the Georgia port city of Brunswick. Bryan joined the pursuit in his own pickup and recorded the cellphone video that later leaked online.

To back the hate crime charges, prosecutors showed roughly two dozen text messages and social media posts in which Travis McMichael and Bryan used racist slurs and made derogatory comments about Black people. The FBI wasn't able to access Greg McMichael's phone because it was encrypted.

In 2018, Travis McMichael commented on a Facebook video of a Black man playing a prank on a white person: "I'd kill that f----ing n----r."

A woman who served under Travis McMichael in the U.S. Coast Guard a decade ago said he called her "n—— r lover," after learning she'd dated a Black man. Another woman testified Greg McMichael had ranted angrily in 2015 when she remarked on the death of civil rights activist Julian Bond, saying, "All those Blacks are nothing but trouble."

Crump remarked after the verdict that "for many of us, there was never any doubt that Greg McMichael, Travis McMichael, and William Bryan targeted Ahmaud because of his skin color."

Asia

Hong Kong orders mandatory COVID-19 tests for residents

AP

Residents line up to get tested for the coronavirus at a temporary testing center despite the rain in Hong Kong, Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022.

HONG KONG (AP)—Hong Kong will test its entire population of 7.5 million people for COVID-19 in March, the city's leader said Tuesday, as it grapples with its worst outbreak driven by the omicron variant.

The population will be tested three times in March, Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said.

She said testing capacity will be boosted to 1 million a day or more.

"Since we have a population of some 7 million people, testing will take about seven days," she said.

Hong Kong has reported about 5,000 new daily infections since Feb. 15, with the cases threatening to overwhelm its healthcare system. Since the current surge began at the beginning of the year, the city has recorded nearly 54,000 cases and 145 deaths.

The order for citywide testing comes after mainland Chinese authorities dispatched epidemiologists, health workers and other medical resources last week to help contain the outbreak in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Hong Kong has largely aligned itself with mainland China's "zero-COVID-19" policy, which aims to totally stamp out outbreaks, even as many other countries are shifting their approach to living with the virus.

Lockdowns of entire cities have been imposed in a number of areas of the mainland, but Lam said no such measure is currently being considered in Hong Kong because it is "not realistic."

She also denied that the central Chinese government is giving instructions to Hong Kong on how to handle the epidemic.

"I reiterate that the central government never issued any instructions on our anti-epidemic work," she said. "The central government will offer support as needed or upon our request, but of course we will always exchange our views."

The "zero-COVID-19" strategy means that Hong Kong authorities often take measures such as locking down residential estates for mass testing when positive cases are detected, imposing strict quarantine requirements on travelers and ordering the shuttering of businesses.

The rapid surge of infections in the city has threatened to overwhelm its healthcare system.

Health officials said last week that hospitals were already at 90% of capacity and isolation facilities were full. People who test positive for the virus in Hong Kong must either be admitted to a hospital or a quarantine facility.

Lam acknowledged on Tuesday that the city's isolation facilities are "severely inadequate" and that it is "working very hard with the full support of the central authorities" to build more.

Current social-distancing measures, such as a ban on dining at restaurants after 6 p.m. and the closure of businesses such as gyms and bars, will be extended until April 20.

"This is not good news to the sectors affected, but really at this stage of the pandemic we have no choice but to take these measures," Lam said.

UN expert scores China, Russia for arms sales to Myanmar

GENEVA (AP)—An independent human rights expert working with the United Nations is criticizing China and Russia for allegedly supplying weapons used by Myanmar's military against civilians since it seized power last year.

Tom Andrews, a special rapporteur working with the U.N. human rights office, urged countries to halt such sales. He also called on the U.N. Security Council, where China and Russia are permanent members, to hold an emergency meeting to discuss a possible ban on sales of arms used by Myanmar's military against civilians.

"The people of Myanmar are imploring the U.N. to act," Andrews said in a statement Tuesday. "They deserve an up-or-down vote on a Security Council resolution that will stop the sale of weapons being used to kill them."

The findings come in a new report from Andrews on the types and amounts of weapons used by the military as early as 2018, when it led a bloody crackdown on the Muslim Rohingya minority that caused hundreds of thousands to flee to neighboring Bangladesh.

Andrews' research described several categories of weapons transfers, with the ones he identified "most problematically" coming from China, Russia and Serbia, because they have been sent since 2018 and continued after the military's takeover last year.

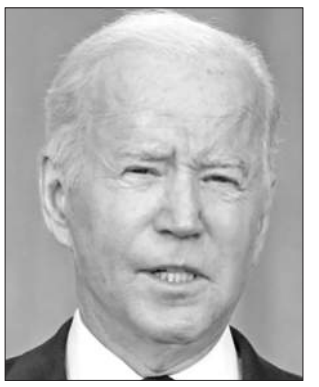
World

Bigger confrontation ahead

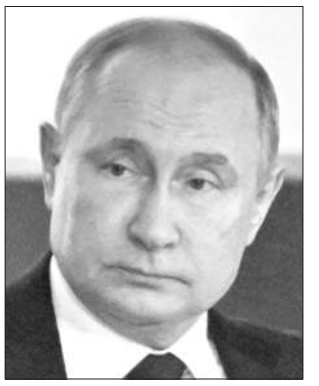
MOSCOW (AP)—The East-West faceoff over Ukraine escalated dramatically Tuesday, with Russian lawmakers authorizing President Vladimir Putin to use military force outside his country and U.S. President Joe Biden and European leaders responding by slapping sanctions on Russian oligarchs and banks.

Both leaders signaled that an even bigger confrontation could lie ahead. Putin has yet to unleash the force of the 150,000 troops massed on three sides of Ukraine, while Biden held back on even tougher sanctions that could cause economic turmoil for Russia but said they would go ahead if there is further aggression.

The measures, accompanied by the repositioning of additional U.S. troops to the Baltic nations on NATO's eastern flank bordering Russia, came as Russian forces rolled into rebel-held areas in eastern Ukraine after Putin said he was recognizing the independence of the separatist regions in defiance of U.S. and European demands.



Biden



Putin

Speaking at the White House, Biden said the Kremlin had flagrantly violated international law in what he called the "beginning of a Russian invasion of Ukraine." He warned of more sanctions if Putin went further.

"We are united in our support of Ukraine," Biden said. "We are united in our opposition to Russian aggression." When it comes to Russian claims of a justification or pretext for an invasion, Biden said, "None of us should be fooled. None of us will be fooled. There is no justification."

Hopes for a diplomatic resolution to the threat of invasion, which U.S. officials have for weeks portrayed as all but inevitable, appeared to evaporate. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken canceled plans for a Thursday meeting in Geneva with his Russian counterpart, saying it would not be productive and that Russia's actions indicated Moscow was not serious about a peaceful path to resolving the crisis.

Western nations sought to present a united front, with more than two dozen European Union members unanimously agreeing to levy their own initial set of sanctions against Russian officials. Germany also said it was halting the process of certifying the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia—a lucrative deal long sought by Moscow but criticized by the U.S. for increasing Europe's reliance on Russian energy.

The U.S., meanwhile, moved to cut off Russia's government from Western finance, sanctioning two of its banks and blocking it from trading in its debt on American and European markets. The administration's actions hit civilian leaders in Russia's leadership hierarchy and two Russian banks considered especially close to the Kremlin and Russia's military, with more than $80 billion in assets. That includes freezing all of those banks' assets under U.S. jurisdictions.

Biden, though, did hold back some of the broadest and toughest of the financial penalties contemplated by the U.S., including sanctions that would reinforce the hold that Germany put on any startup of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline; an export ban that would deny Russia U.S. high tech for its industries and military; and sweeping bans that could cripple Russia's ability to do business with the rest of the world.

Biden said he was moving additional U.S. troops to the Baltics, though he described the deployments as purely "defensive," asserting, "We have no intention of fighting Russia." The U.S. is sending about 800 infantry troops and 40 attack aircraft to NATO's eastern flank from other locations within Europe, according to a senior defense official. In addition, a contingent of F-35 strike fighters and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters will also be relocated.

Earlier Tuesday, members of Russia's upper house, the Federation Council, voted unanimously to allow Putin to use military force outside the country—effectively formalizing a Russian military deployment to the rebel regions, where an eight-year conflict has killed nearly 14,000 people.

Shortly afterward, Putin laid out three conditions to end the crisis that has threatened to plunge Europe back into war, raising the specter of massive casualties, energy shortages across the continent and global economic chaos.

Putin said the crisis could be resolved if Kyiv recognizes Russia's sovereignty over Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula that Moscow annexed after seizing it from Ukraine in 2014, renounces its bid to join NATO and partially demilitarizes. The West has decried the annexation of Crimea as a violation of international law and has previously flatly rejected permanently barring Ukraine from NATO.

Asked whether he has sent any Russian troops into Ukraine and how far they could go, Putin responded: "I haven't said that the troops will go there right now." He added that "it's impossible to forecast a specific pattern of action—it will depend on a concrete situation as it takes shape on the ground."

The EU announced initial sanctions aimed at the 351 Russian lawmakers who voted for recognizing the two separatist regions in Ukraine, as well as 27 other Russian officials and institutions from the defense and banking sectors. They also sought to limit Moscow's access to EU capital and financial markets.

With tensions rising and a broader conflict looking more likely, the White House began referring to the Russian deployments in the region known as the Donbas as an "invasion" after initially hesitating to use the term—a red line that Biden had said would result in severe sanctions.

"We think this is, yes, the beginning of an invasion, Russia's latest invasion into Ukraine," Jon Finer, principal deputy national security adviser, said on CNN. "An invasion is an invasion, and that is what is underway."

Environment

Trash drop-off held for Precinct 5 residents

By IVA MAURIN
ivamaurin@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Precinct 5 representatives Richard Lizama and Leila Staffler last Monday, Feb. 21, hosted another trash drop-off, this time in Kannat Tabla, providing a much-needed avenue for residents in the area to easily drop off their trash—for free.

Three large construction containers were provided to segregate white waste [such as furniture], metal wastes, and household trash. In addition, another trailer was also made available to reach out and actually go and pick up trash from residents who do not have access to transportation and have asked for assistance.

"We know that it's hard to get to Marpi," Staffler said. "We have done this before in the Precinct 5 area of Kagman, and we had such a positive response. A lot of people said, 'What about other areas?' so my partner [Lizama] and I have been looking for good locations to have this kind of [drop-off event] for the rest of Precinct 5."

Last year, in April, the trash drop-off the two representatives organized in Kagman received an overwhelming response, with a total of 29 vehicles dropping off trash that filled three full loads of containers, all hauled to the landfill afterwards.

"Marpi is pretty far and…not everybody can go…all the way to the Transfer Station. …And so we wanted to bring it closer," Staffler said.

The representative also pointed out that while there are a lot of public spaces and open fields in Kagman, there are not many areas in the rest of the precinct that are conducive for holding events like the trash drop-off. Luckily, she said, the Kannat Tabla road paving is already done, which gave them an open spot to put the large dumpsters, at least for the day.

"The people who have come to take advantage are really grateful," Staffler added.

"A lot of the trash that they've brought is still remaining from the typhoon so it's nice to get that feeling of getting that off of your property and making it clean again. When people have a chance to clean up, it reduces vermin and other disturbances in your property. We just want to help people get that chance."

While the trash drop-off is just a one day event to help Precinct 5 residents with their trash, a more permanent Kagman Residential Solid Waste Transfer Station is in the works, which will serve as a trash collection point facility for residents in the area.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rep. Leila Staffler (D-Saipan) helps a resident dump trash in one of the three large construction containers set to haul white wastes, metal wastes, and household trash at the Trash Drop-Off, organized in partnership with Rep. Richard Lizama (D-Saipan), last Monday in Kannat Tabla.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Precinct 5 representatives Richard Lizama (D-Saipan) and Leila Staffler (D-Saipan) teamed up to provide large construction containers for residents to drop off their white wastes, metal wastes, and household trash, at the Trash Drop-Off last Monday in Kannat Tabla.

Black carbon pollution from tourism, research melting Antarctic snow, study says

By JOSEPH OSTAPIUK
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE, N.Y.

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.—Black carbon, a noxious byproduct of burning fossil fuels, is hastening snow melt in Antarctica, a study said, posing an increased threat to a delicate area already undergoing climate-caused changes.

The pollution, commonly known as soot, is primarily being fueled by an increase in tourism and the expansion of research facilities on the continent, researchers said, and is causing about one inch of snowpack to shrink each summer in its most-visited regions.

The research comes as the Antarctic ice sheets already undergo insidious melting spurred by climbing global temperatures—an effect of human-caused carbon emissions that is expected to continue in the coming decades, even if temperatures are stabilized.

"Our surveys show that black carbon content in snow surrounding research facilities and popular shore tourist-landing sites is considerably above background levels measured elsewhere in the continent," said researchers. "Mechanisms to mitigate black carbon impacts are needed."

Black carbon affects the snow's albedo—the ability of a surface to reflect sunlight. Normally, Antartica operates like a large mirror that effectively reflects the sun's rays; however, the dark particles of black carbon reduce that reflectivity and cause the snow to absorb sunlight instead of shed it.

As a result, more heat is trapped, causing temperature increases and cascading warming impacts.

The International Association of Antartica Tour Operators said around 74,000 people visited Antartica between 2019 and 2020, which represented a 32% increase from 2018 to 2019 and a more-than-two-fold hike from the total in 2010.

Most tourists arrive to Antartica by cruise vessels, which often land at sites the scientists tested for black carbon. Additionally, airplanes, diesel power plants, generators, helicopters and trucks are all sources of black carbon that can affect snow miles away after winds carry the particles.

While some of the pollution can be carried from other portions of the globe, Antartica generally has been minimally affected by this source, the study indicated. By comparison, the researchers estimated the average visitor may accelerate summer snowpack melting by 83 tons.

Scientists studying on the continent, meanwhile, are also contributing to black carbon totals, according to the research.

Some of the facilities used by scientists have "developed into logistical hubs" and are often "on or near the coast," sharing the tourist shore landings and effectively working to increase pollutants in those areas.

"The intensive use of fuel-powered equipment at scientific stations makes the average snow losses attributable to each researcher" even more significant than tourists, the study found.

The findings, the researchers said, call for necessary changes to human activity in the region.

Plastic pollution in oceans on track to rise for decades

BERLIN (AP)—Plastic pollution at sea is reaching worrying levels and will continue to grow even if significant action is taken now to stop such waste from reaching the world's oceans, according to a review of hundreds of academic studies.

The review by Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute, commissioned by environmental campaign group WWF, examined almost 2,600 research papers on the topic to provide an overview ahead of a United Nations meeting later this month.

"We find it in the deepest ocean trenches, at the sea surface and in Arctic sea ice," said biologist Melanie Bergmann who co-authored the study, which was published Tuesday.

Some regions—such as the Mediterranean, the East China and Yellow Seas—already contain dangerous levels of plastic, while others risk becoming increasingly polluted in the future, it found.

The authors concluded that almost every species in the ocean has been affected by plastic pollution and that it's harming important ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves.

As plastic breaks down into ever-smaller pieces it also enters the marine food chain, being ingested in everything from whales to turtles to tiny plankton.

Getting that plastic out of the water again is nearly impossible, so policy-makers should focus on preventing any more of it entering the oceans in the first place, said Bergmann.

Some of the studies showed that even if this were to happen today, the amount of marine microplastic would keep increasing for decades, she said.

Matthew MacLeod, a professor of environmental science at Stockholm University who was not involved in the report, said it appeared to be a sound review of existing studies, focused on the effects of plastic pollution.

"The part that can (and will) be argued about is whether there is enough evidence to warrant aggressive action (such as what is advocated in this report) that will certainly disrupt current practices for plastic production, use and disposal," he said.

MacLeod was involved in a separate study recently that also concluded immediate measures are required because of the possible global impacts.

Heike Vesper of WWF said while consumers can help reduce plastic pollution by changing their behavior, governments have to step up and share the burden of tackling the problem.

"What we need is a good policy framework," she said, looking ahead to the upcoming U.N. environmental meeting in Nairobi. "It's a global problem and it needs global solutions."

Life & Style

Queen still has mild COVID symptoms, cancels online meetings

LONDON (AP)—Queen Elizabeth II canceled scheduled online engagements on Tuesday because she is still experiencing mild cold-like symptoms after testing positive for COVID-19, Buckingham Palace said.

The 95-year-old monarch "has decided not to undertake her planned virtual engagements today, but will continue with light duties," a palace spokesman said.

Officials confirmed Sunday that the queen tested positive for COVID-19. The diagnosis prompted concern and get-well wishes from across Britain's political spectrum for the queen, the country's longest-reigning monarch.

The palace said Sunday that Elizabeth, who has been fully vaccinated and had a booster shot, would continue with "light" duties at Windsor Castle over the coming week.

The queen reached the milestone of 70 years on the throne on Feb. 6, the anniversary of the 1952 death of her father, King George VI. She will turn 96 on April 21.

Both the queen's eldest son, Prince Charles, 73, and her 74-year-old daughter-in-law, Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, contracted COVID-19 earlier this month. Charles has since returned to work. There are also thought to have been several recent virus cases among the staff at Windsor Castle, where the queen is staying.

Elizabeth spent a night in a London hospital for unspecified tests in October and until recently had been under doctors' orders to rest and only undertake light duties.

She canceled various major engagements late last year but returned this month to public duties, and has held audiences both virtually and in person with diplomats, politicians and senior military officers.

Late brother's dying wish becomes one-sided effort

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I am one of six adult siblings. Our youngest brother, "Clark," died of cancer five years ago. He was my best friend. As kids, we did everything together, and we remained close as we got older. As he was dying, Clark asked me to keep his wife, "Liz," and his children in the family. I have tried my best.

Every year, I have a large family Christmas party. Liz and her children attend and seem to have a good time. I call or text her monthly, but I rarely receive a reply. She did text me happy birthday. I was OK with this until I heard from my nephew (Clark's son) that there was a memorial service for him. When I asked him who was there, he said everybody. It really hurt because I wasn't informed, nor were any of my siblings.

I want to respect Clark's wishes, but even before this, Liz didn't seem to respect my nuclear family. I don't know what to do going forward because I have such sad and angry feelings over not being invited to his memorial.

CONFLICTED SIS IN THE EAST

DEAR SIS: Please accept my sympathy for the loss of your brother. What you should do is call your former sister-in-law and ask her WHY you and your siblings were excluded from the memorial, which is a shocking oversight. Then, if her apology is not satisfactory, consider yourself relieved of that deathbed promise, which clearly hasn't been appreciated.

DEAR ABBY: I was recently in a restaurant with a friend who is deaf. (I can hear.) We were using American Sign Language to communicate. A group walked past us, saw we were using sign language and assumed neither of us could hear. One of them told her friends we were deaf and dumb. When the server came to my table to take our order and they realized I could hear, they were visibly surprised.

The speaker did not appear to be embarrassed by what she had said. The woman's back was turned to my friend, so my friend was unaware of it. (Thank heavens, because my friend can read lips.) I didn't say anything at the time and let it go.

Should I have? I didn't because their table was near ours, and I was afraid the woman would have gotten ruder and made the whole dining experience bad. Should I have said something to the manager or server and sat at another table? If the manager had said something to her, I doubt she would have admitted what she said.

NOT RIGHT IN OHIO

DEAR NOT RIGHT: You were right not to challenge the woman who said that. If she wasn't embarrassed when it turned out you could hear clearly, little you could say would have shamed her. There was nothing the restaurant manager could do about this woman's breach of etiquette. You, however, could have asked to change your table if you were no longer comfortable seated next to that party.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Cirque du Soleil plans a new and hybrid Las Vegas show

NEW YORK (AP)—Cirque du Soleil is planning a brand new, eye-popping show on the Las Vegas Strip this spring that appropriately flips its typical script.

"Mad Apple" will feature stand-up comedians, close-up magic and a live band playing pop music onstage alongside Cirque's famous acrobats in a new hybrid form of live entertainment.

The show—inspired by New York City's eclectic nightlife of jazz cubs, street buskers, comedy shows and live music—will replace "Zumanity" at the New York-New York Hotel & Casino in May on the Las Vegas Strip.

"We really wanted to do something joyous and something celebratory," veteran producer Simon Painter told The Associated Press ahead of Tuesday's unveiling. "It's basically a giant party, the greatest night out in New York."

"Mad Apple" will be Cirque's sixth Las Vegas show and the first all-new one since it emerged from bankruptcy protection with new owners. In 2020, it had to suspend its productions around the globe as the pandemic crushed live entertainment.

Visitors enter the performance space before the show to find a massive bar and are greeted by magicians. The bar then transforms into the stage and the show begins, the infamous Cirque clowns replaced by two stand-up veterans—Brad Williams and Chris Turner.

(PHOTO BY RICH FURY/INVISION/AP, FILE)

Cast members from Cirque du Soleil perform on stage during the "KURIOS - Cabinet of Curiosities" premiere in Los Angeles on Dec. 9, 2015. Cirque du Soleil is planning a brand new, eye-popping show, "Mad Apple" on the Las Vegas Strip this spring. It will feature stand-up comedians, close-up magic and a live band playing pop music alongside its famous acrobats and contortionists.

"I'm the first stand-up comedian to be a part of a Cirque show and doing traditional standup," said Williams. "That's really exciting to me because I do like doing things that I've never done before."

Usually, a Cirque show means pre-recorded whimsical and atmospheric world-beat music, but not here. A live band with singers will stay onstage for most of "Mad Apple" performing hits by the likes of Billy Joel and Lady Gaga, including tunes by the Gershwins and notable jazz, culminating in "a big sort of Studio 54 party," Painter said. "The whole show is set to the soundtrack of New York."

Unlike many of Cirque's big-top shows, there will be no narrative. "Given the current state of the world and everything else, we wanted to do a piece that was pure entertainment," said Painter.

"Mad Apple" won't skimp on physical stunts, with acrobats tumbling on top of a New York City taxi, an acrobat swinging on a New York street sign and the show closing with an acrobat doing tricks on an aerial pendulum of the Empire State Building.

"You could go see an acrobatic Cirque show. You can go see a live band. You can go see a magician. You can go see a comedian—and that's four separate shows. Or you can go see 'Mad Apple' at New York-New York and all of that will be in one show," said Williams. "This is a Cirque show that is really trying new things."

When he was approached by Painter, Williams asked what sort of comedy the creative team was looking for. Would there need to be a theme, topics to avoid or suggested areas? "Simon said the most beautiful thing a performer could ever hear," said Williams. "He said, 'All I care is that it's funny.'"

The show in some ways promises to nod to Cirque's DIY Canadian roots. The now-global entertainment giant started out humbly with just a couple of buskers in Quebec.

Painter's company, The Works Entertainment, which Cirque acquired in 2019, has developed several other live shows including "The Illusionists" and "Circus 1903," which have always had a strong comedic element. Neil Dorward, veteran The Works director, will direct "Mad Apple."

Encore! Nelly to play NY State Fair for second year in a row

GEDDES, N.Y. (AP)—Fans who missed Nelly at last year's New York State Fair are getting another chance this summer. Organizers announced Monday that the Grammy-winning rapper will be back at the fairgrounds Aug. 31.

Nelly

"Nelly's show last year was one of the biggest in fair history, and we are fortunate to be able to bring him back so quickly," fair Director Troy Waffner said in a statement.

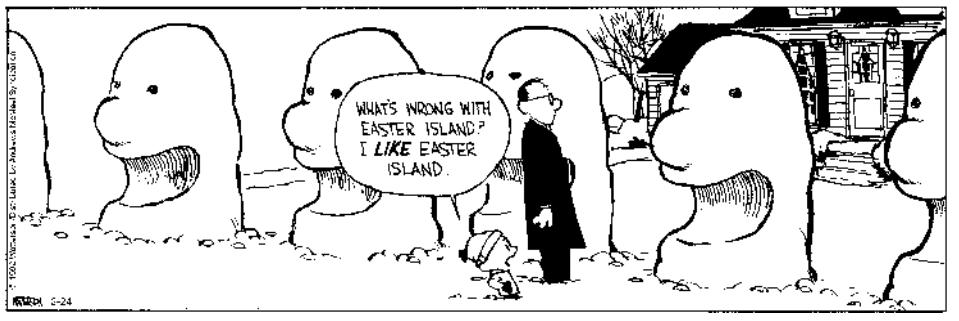
The state fair will run from Aug. 24 to Sept. 5 this year at the fairgrounds near Syracuse. Chevrolet sponsors the concerts, which are free with fair admission.

With three Grammys and a roster of platinum and gold records, Nelly is known for tracks including "Hot in Herre," "Country Grammar," and "Ride wit Me."

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

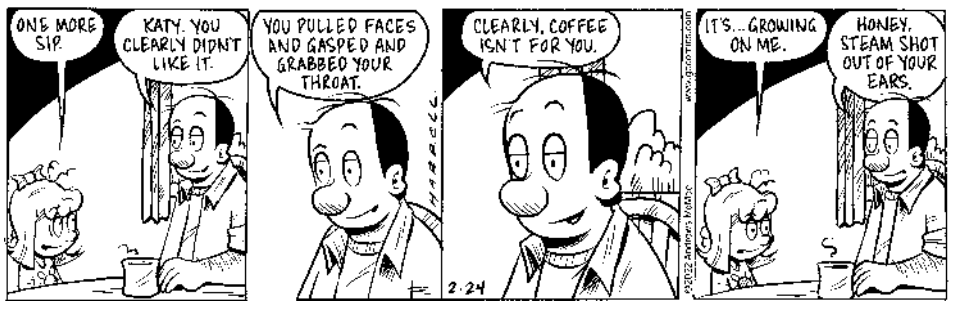


Garfield®

By Jim Davis

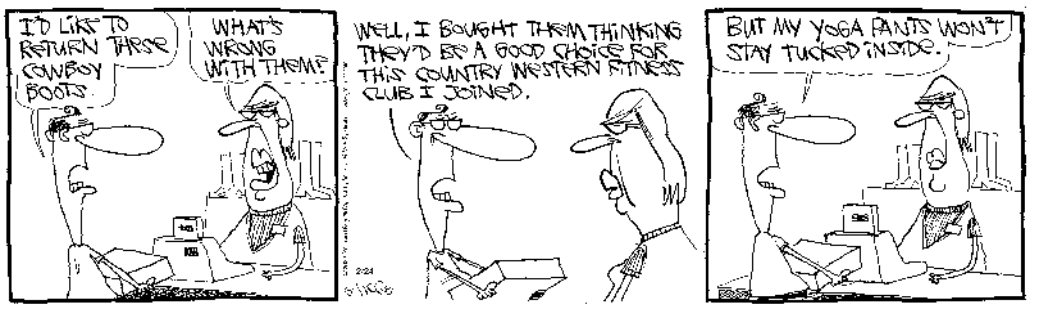
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ONE MORE SIP.
KATY. YOU CLEARLY DIDN'T LIKE IT.
YOU PULLED FACES AND GASPED AND GRABBED YOUR THROAT.
CLEARLY, COFFEE ISN'T FOR YOU.
IT'S... GROWING ON ME.
HONEY. STEAM SHOT OUT OF YOUR EARS.
2-24

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I'D LIKE TO RETURN THESE COWBOY BOOTS.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THEM?
WELL, I BOUGHT THEM THINKING THEY'D BE A GOOD CHOICE FOR THIS COUNTRY WESTERN FITNESS CLUB I JOINED.
BUT MY YOGA PANTS WON'T STAY TUCKED INSIDE.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

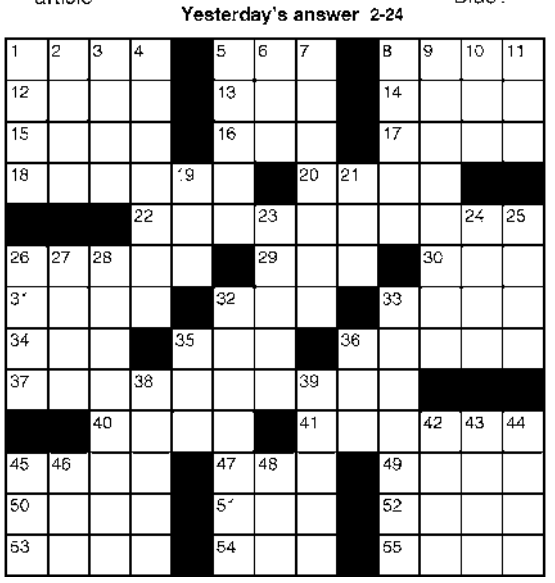
1 Group of quail
5 NASCAR advertiser
8 Espy
12 China setting
13 Luau bowlful
14 Zilch
15 Fermi's bit
16 Have
17 Pro votes
18 Deli meat
20 Barks
22 Misleading statements
26 Senate broadcaster
29 Vegas opener?
30 Motor City labor org.
31 Melodies
32 Existed
33 "East of Eden" girl
34 Gun lobby org.
35 German article
36 Mary-Kate or Ashley
37 Football game part
40 Frog's kin
41 "My Fair Lady" lyricist
45 Brainiac
47 Science room
49 Caesar's "Behold!"
50 Runner's tempo
51 Outback bird
52 Singer Céline
53 Mellowed
54 Badly lit
55 City on a fjord

DOWN

1 Cote calls
2 "Como — usted?"
3 Cello's ancestor
4 Some motorcycles
5 Go bad
6 Road rescue
7 Toy-filled targets
8 Big mix-up
9 Proof-of-work documents
10 Praise in verse
11 Prof's helpers
19 Fellow
21 Monopoly buys (Abbr.)
23 News bulletin
24 Aesopian also-ran
25 Cygnet's parent
26 Axes
27 Beget
28 Custom
32 Walked like a duck
33 Creamy pasta sauce
35 "CSI" evidence
36 Flamenco cry
38 Leaked slowly
39 Photo book
42 "JAG" spinoff
43 Earth sci.
44 Gambling mecca
45 New Deal org.
46 Harpy
48 "— Blue?"

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 2-24



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: O'Shea Jackson Jr., 31; Billy Zane, 56; Helen Shaver, 71; Edward James Olmos, 75.

Happy Birthday: Take your time. Go over every detail. It's better to be safe than sorry. Take a secretive approach to what you plan to achieve this year. Once you have a doable plan mapped out, you can connect the dots and work toward your goal. Leave no room for mistakes. Have a good backup plan in place, and feel confident moving forward. Your numbers are 5, 11, 16, 27, 31, 39, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Bite into something that you feel passionate about and turn it into a project that makes you feel good about what you accomplish. Stop waiting for something to come along. Concentrate on what you want, and take responsibility for your happiness. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Be careful what you donate to or get involved in financially. Shared expenses, joint ventures and unorthodox investments won't pan out. Don't get swept up in someone else's dream. Protect your assets, interests and reputation. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* A steady pace forward, resourceful approach and avoiding interference will carve a path to a successful venture. Take note of what you have, what you want and what you must do to maintain and surpass your expectations. Trust and believe in yourself. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take time to explore new possibilities. Update your skills, consider other positions and take an honest look at the past and the changes you want to make. Invest time, money and effort in your skills and the way you present yourself. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Put your head down, work hard and don't stop until you reach your designated destination. Take control of situations, and refuse to let anyone convince you to go against your gut feeling. Don't allow emotional matters to turn into costly affairs. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Keep life simple, avoid emotional chaos and don't overreact. Keep busy; do something physical that makes you feel good about how you look and feel. A healthy routine and spending time doing things with people you love are encouraged. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Rethink your strategy for dealing with friends, relatives and peers. Don't just wing it and expect to avoid setbacks and discord. Use your intelligence and put a well-thought-out plan in place before you bring about a change that requires precision, detail and ample funds. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Rethink your strategy regarding earning your living, managing your money and living your life. Don't be fooled by what others say or do. Misleading information will hold you hostage when you want to forge ahead and initiate plans. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Put your emotions aside and concentrate on what's required and expected of you. Delve in, and don't stop until you are satisfied with the results. Discipline and moderation will help curb any temptation that comes your way. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Go it alone. If you let others talk you into something you don't need or want, you'll have regrets. Trust in your insight and ability to get things going all by yourself. Information you receive will be disproportionate to your expectations. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Spiff up things at home or work. Make your surroundings support a good mood and excellent output of work. Achieving what you set out to accomplish will raise your spirit and ward off temptation. Don't waste time with rash people. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Keep your emotions in check, don't let unwise behavior take over. A positive attitude will help you overcome any controversy you encounter. Pick and choose your words wisely to avoid backlash from someone critical or negative. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, forgiving and generous. You are accessible and a humanitarian.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

4						9		5
	9				7	2	6	
7	6		2					
	2			5		8		
		9		8			4	
					1		5	2
	5	6	4				1	
3		8						7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/24

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	6	4	3	7	9	5	8	1
9	7	1	5	8	4	6	2	3
5	3	8	2	1	6	4	9	7
1	2	9	7	4	3	8	5	6
3	8	5	1	6	2	9	7	4
6	4	7	8	9	5	3	1	2
7	9	3	6	2	8	1	4	5
8	5	2	4	3	1	7	6	9
4	1	6	9	5	7	2	3	8

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

MINERAL POINT, WISCONSIN Solution: 10 letters

B	A	D	G	E	R	S	T	A	T	E	E	W	S	D
M	G	L	O	B	E	H	O	T	E	L	D	E	L	A
I	O	T	E	D	S	K	R	A	P	R	U	O	D	S
D	T	B	R	A	G	U	S	M	A	Q	G	A	A	P
W	H	O	U	S	E	E	E	H	I	N	O	R	E	O
A	I	B	U	L	L	T	C	T	I	R	N	C	L	H
Y	C	T	C	A	B	R	N	L	L	E	O	H	O	S
R	T	R	O	R	O	A	L	I	R	T	G	I	D	O
D	R	N	L	U	A	O	A	H	T	A	T	T	G	I
N	E	I	U	R	A	R	T	A	L	S	R	E	E	D
U	L	A	M	O	D	O	G	L	N	I	O	C	S	U
G	A	M	N	J	C	E	E	I	D	T	W	T	O	T
R	W	E	F	A	C	R	A	G	E	D	I	U	G	S
A	N	W	E	I	Y	G	E	K	A	H	S	R	R	E
Y	Y	E	L	L	A	I	O	W	A	L	K	E	R	F

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Against, Alley, Antiques, Architecture, Badger State, Board, Bob, Bull, Cafe, Column, Cothren, Cottage, County, Dodge, Fest, Gallery, Globe Hotel, Gold, Gothic, Gray, Guide, Gundry, House, Iowa, Jail, Lead, Lodges, Main, Midway, Orchard, Parks, Railroad, Ridge, Rolling, Row, Rural, Shake, Shops, Studios, Sugar, Temple, Tour, Trelawny, Walker

Yesterday's Answer: Celebration

The NEW **Treasuries 46 and 47** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Cavaliers escape LeBron's shadow as NBA's biggest surprise

CLEVELAND (AP)—There were skeptics, and they included pretty much anyone who watched the Cavaliers struggle the past three years, who wondered about the team's "Let 'Em Know" theme heading into the 2021-22 season. It hardly made sense.

After all, the Cavs had plummeted from elite status and back to irrelevancy after LeBron James left for the second time as a free agent following the 2018 season. With just 60 total wins since then, expectations were low.

Now, Cleveland's back in contention.

Thanks to a young nucleus led by All-Star guard Darius Garland and rookie sensation Evan Mobley, the acquisition of All-Star center Jarrett Allen and Kevin Love's rebirth as a reserve, the Cavaliers are among the Eastern Conference's elite teams.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers' Darius Garland (10) celebrates with teammates Evan Mobley (4) and Jarrett Allen as they hold up their trophies after winning the team shooting part during the skills challenge competition, part of NBA All-Star basketball game weekend, Saturday, Feb. 19, 2022, in Cleveland.

Even long-time nemesis Draymond Green is impressed.

"The biggest surprise team to me is Cleveland, for sure," the talkative Golden State forward said during All-Star weekend, when the entire league got a glimpse at the Cavs' talented core. "I don't think anyone expected them to be this good, and they're really putting it together.

"Obviously in finding a young star in Darius Garland, who is leading the charge. Evan Mobley. They have a great young group of guys. ... They're going to be good for years to come."

Yes, these Cavs appear to be built to last. They are young, hungry and determined to cut their own path. And they're certainly way ahead of schedule.

Cleveland hit the All-Star break at 35-23 and fourth in the East. However, the Cavs' record doesn't fully reflect what's been a challenging return to respectability.

Like every NBA team, they've dealt with their share of COVID-19 issues, injuries, scheduling quirks and the typical season grind.

However, the Cavs have persevered despite both leading scorer Collin Sexton and veteran guard Ricky Rubio suffering season-ending knee injuries — losses that threatened to derail this young team.

Instead, the adversity has only strengthened the Cavs. At the heart of their renaissance is a toughness and togetherness, values often preached and not always embraced.

They have played connected — on offense, defense, and in the locker room.

"I haven't been around a group who doesn't want to disappoint each other the way this group doesn't want to disappoint each other," coach J.B. Bickerstaff said following a comeback win last week. "I haven't been around a group that one through as many guys we've had here this year, has celebrated one another the way that this group celebrates one another.

"So it's truly special. And we have to make sure that we keep fostering and helping it grow."

More than any player, Garland's growth has driven the Cavs' stunning rise.

The baby-faced 22-year-old has developed into one of the league's best point guards, a combination scorer/playmaker capable of dissecting a defense with his dribble or spreading the floor by knocking down a 3-pointer.

One of just four players averaging at least 20 points and eight assists, Garland's game took off this summer when he played for the USA Select Team and against the U.S. Olympic squad as it prepared for the delayed Tokyo Games.

"When we scrimmaged against the main team, that's where you saw a different Darius," said Miami's Erik Spoelstra, who coached Garland. "He was playing extremely well, and everybody in the gym noticed it, to the point when they had injuries they selected him to continue on."

With Garland leading the way, the Cavs have finally crawled from the rubble left by James' departure. Cleveland is again a basketball city, and not just because it has one of the best players on the planet.

The Cavs are poised to make their first playoff appearance without James since 1998.

"Our guys want to make our own legacy," Garland said during All-Star Weekend. "I mean, just putting Cleveland on the map without LeBron would mean a lot to all of us. A rebuild, rebirth in Cleveland. It's a new look, a new feel."

Growing pains are almost certainly ahead for a team lacking overall playoff experience.

Morant, Grizzlies look for strong finish, playoff success

By TERESA M. WALKER
AP SPORTS WRITER

Ja Morant's goal is to give Memphis Grizzlies much more than the memorable highlight 360-degree dunk during his first All-Star Game.

The third-year point guard plans on delivering Memphis an NBA title.

"Our goal is to win the championship, and I feel like as long as we stay locked in, continue to grow together, play together, that goal can be achieved," Morant said. "We just got to stay the course, take it day by day and let it play out."

After having to play their way into the postseason last season, the surprising Grizzlies have the NBA's third-best record overall with 22 games remaining. They trail only Phoenix (48-10) and Golden State (42-17) with Memphis (41-19) just 1 1/2 games back of the Warriors.

It's an impressive turnaround after being 9-10 on Nov. 27 with Morant first out with an injured left knee, then health and safety protocols that cost him 12 games. Since then, the Grizzlies are 32-9 and lead the NBA in several statistical categories.

Memphis is tied with Charlotte as the NBA's top scoring team averaging 113.8 points a game. The Grizzlies also lead the league in rebounds (48.9), steals (10.1) and blocks (6.3) per game even with injuries limiting Dillon Brooks — their best perimeter defender — to 21 games.

Golden State coach Steve Kerr believes the Grizzlies are solid on both ends of the floor.

"A really good two-way team, creative on both ends," Kerr said. "Even with the guys they have out, they're really deep and flexible. They're hot right now."

This is what the Grizzlies wanted when controlling owner Robert Pera shook up his front office in April 2019 and made Zach Kleiman general manager. Memphis already had Jaren Jackson Jr. as the fourth overall pick in 2018, then nabbed Morant at No. 2 in 2019.

Kleiman has assembled a very young and deep team with 12 Grizzlies in their third NBA season or less. Center Steven Adams, a trade acquisition last summer, is the oldest in his ninth season. Rookie Ziaire Williams, the 10th overall pick, currently is a starter along with Desmond Bane, the 30th pick in 2020.

AP

Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (12) shoots against Portland Trail Blazers forward Justise Winslow (26) and guard Josh Hart (11) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022, in Memphis, Tenn.

Third-year coach Taylor Jenkins has gotten them to play stingy defense led by Jackson, third in the NBA blocking 2.17 shots per game. They turn blocks and steals into more fast-break points than anyone else in the league with the Grizzlies finishing with lots of high-flying dunks.

"When we do that, it's a spark, and we're really dangerous when we get out into the open court," Jenkins said.

Preparing for the Grizzlies requires a lot of attention to Memphis' transition defense. Detroit coach Dwane Casey credits the Grizzlies with having excellent defensive hands and Jenkins and his staff putting them in a system that fits Memphis perfectly.

"They're a handful," Casey said. "I don't see a lot of weaknesses. You look at other teams in the West, and you see the Memphis Grizzlies right there at the top."

The Grizzlies are 19-0 when scoring at least 120 points, and they started February scoring at least 120 points in six straight games, the longest streak by any NBA team this season.

Morant is the reason for the Grizzlies' high hopes as they begin the second half Thursday night at Minnesota.

He's the NBA's seventh-leading scorer averaging 26.8 points a game. He's also on pace to become the sixth player in league history to average at least 25 points, five rebounds and five assists a game at the age of 22 or younger. The others are Oscar Robertson, Michael Jordan, Tracy McGrady, LeBron James and Luka Doncic.

Giannis Antetokuonmpo, the Finals MVP who led Milwaukee to the title last summer, said Morant and the Grizzlies are another small market team that can compete for the championship.

"He has an unbelievable team," Antetokounmpo said. "They have great culture, a great coach. The sky is the limit for them."

Another day runs off clock in MLB talks to save opening day

JUPITER, Fla. (AP)—Another day ran off the clock on talks to salvage opening day when locked-out baseball players proposed what they considered a small move forward in drawn-out labor negotiations and management termed it a third straight step backward.

Management again proposed a federal mediator enter the negotiations, but the union immediately turned down that idea, leaving Major League Baseball on track to lose regular-season games to a labor dispute for the first time since 1995.

Less than a week remains until the sides reach what management says is a Monday deadline for a deal that would allow the season to start as scheduled on March 31. Players have not said whether they accept that timeframe, and there remains a sense both sides are awaiting more time pressure to force more major moves by the other.

Still, the sides agreed to meet for a third day in a row Wednesday, the 84th day of the second-longest work stoppage in baseball history.

Players made a tiny shift toward management Tuesday on their proposal for increased salary arbitration eligibility, lowering to the top 75% by service time among the group with at least two seasons in the majors but less than three.

The union last week came off its prior demand that all two-year players be eligible — the level from 1974-86 — and instead proposed the top 80% by service. Teams have said any movement in this area is not significant because management maintains it will never agree to any increase.

Players took a step back from clubs in their proposal for major league minimum salaries, which had been for $775,000 this season with $25,000 annual increases during a five-year deal to $875,000 in 2026. The union instead proposed a $30,000 rise each year, to $895,000 in the final year.

MLB has proposed a rise from $570,500 to $630,000 and then by $10,000 annually, to $670,000 by 2026.

The union calculated its movement for the day as $25 million over five years. The $5 million average amounts to just over 0.1% of player compensation that totaled $4.05 billion last season, down from a record high of just under $4.25 billion in 2017.

The sides drew closer on their proposals for a lottery that would determine the early picks in each year's amateur draft, with the union lowering its proposal to the top seven selections from eight, a day after management raised from three to four. The union also is asking for other adjustments that management hasn't been interested in.

There were two sessions, a main meeting followed by caucuses and then a two-on-two discussion among union lead negotiator Bruce Meyer, Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem, Colorado CEO Dick Monfort and New York Mets pitcher Max Scherzer.

The sides had met on consecutive days just once before, on Jan. 24 and 25.

There was no movement on the biggest issue: luxury tax thresholds and rates.

The union made its last proposal just before the lockout started Dec. 2, dropping from $248 million to $245 million for this year, with a rise to $273 million by 2026.

Teams have been offering an increase from last season's $210 million to $214 million in both this year and next and they have not moved off that. On Feb. 12 they upped their proposal by $2 million annually in each of the final three season of a deal: $216 million in 2024, $218 million in 2025 and $222 million in 2026.

AP

Houston Astros' Jason Castro, left, and Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Tony Clark arrive at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Fla., for baseball labor negotiations, Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022.

Teams have told the union they will not decrease revenue sharing and will not add new methods for players to accrue service time, which players said are needed to prevent teams from holding players back to delay free agency.

There also was no change in the proposals for a pool of money devoted to players not yet eligible for salary arbitration. The union is at $115 million and clubs at $20 million.

Management termed this a step backward because the union increased its plan by $15 million on Feb. 17, five days after teams accepted the union concept and offered $10 million. Clubs upped their offer to $20 million on Monday, when negotiations were shifted from New York to Roger Dean Stadium, the spring training home of the Miami Marlins and St. Louis Cardinals.

While much of the focus is on the deal's impact on the top of the market, the union also asked Tuesday for increases in the minor league minimum, which was $46,600 last year for a player signing his first big league contract and $93,000 for a player signing a second or later major league contract.

Josh Hamilton pleads to misdemeanor in daughter-assault case

By TERRY WALLACE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

One-time Texas Rangers slugger Josh Hamilton pleaded guilty Tuesday to a misdemeanor in a case arising from an altercation with his teenage daughter, officials said.

Hamilton, 40, pleaded guilty in Fort Worth, Texas, on Tuesday to unlawful restraint under a plea deal that dismisses a 2020 felony indictment for injury to a child, the Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney's Office said in social media postings.

State District Judge Mike Thomas sentenced Hamilton to one year of deferred probation, fined him $500 and ordered him to pay court costs, do community service and attend parenting and anger management classes. Thomas ordered him not to consume alcohol, be subject to random urine drug tests and have no contact with the daughter he restrained. If he satisfies the probation's requirements, the charge will be dismissed.

Hamilton's attorneys had said the Texas Rangers Hall of Famer was innocent of injury to a child.

His 14-year-old daughter told her mother, Hamilton's ex-wife, that her father struck her after he became enraged by a comment from her.

According to an affidavit by a Keller Police Department detective, Hamilton's daughter told police that he went on a rampage on Sept. 30, 2019. She says she made a comment to Hamilton that upset him, so he threw a full water bottle overhand at her, hitting her in the chest, then cursed and shouted at her.

He pulled away the chair on which she rested her feet and threw it, breaking the chair, she told detectives. It didn't hit her, but he grabbed her by the shoulders and lifted her from the chair on which she sat. She fell to the floor, and he lifted her, threw her over his shoulder and carried her to her bedroom.

The girl said at this point she was telling Hamilton, "I'm sorry." Upon reaching her bedroom door, he tossed the teen onto her bed, pressed her face onto the mattress and began hitting her legs with an open hand and closed fist.

She said that after he finished striking her, he said he hoped she would tell the judge "what a terrible dad I am so I don't have to see you anymore, and you don't have to come to my house again."

As he left the room, Hamilton's daughter said he told her to gather her things for school. When she replied that she had already put them in the car, he responded, "Well, aren't you just the perfect child."

The matter "has been a nightmare, to put it mildly," according to a statement read on behalf of the daughter when Hamilton entered the plea.

"My mom has taught me to forgive and how to love well, set boundaries, and pray for those who hurt us, but it isn't always easy. I hope for all of our sakes he gets the help he needs.," she said.

Hamilton also has two other daughters with his former wife, Katie Chadwick Hamilton.

Former Dolphins coach Flores: Race played a factor in firing

MIAMI (AP)—Former Miami Dolphins head coach Brian Flores thinks race placed a factor in the team's decision to fire him in January.

Speaking on the "I Am Athlete" podcast co-hosted by former NFL wide receivers Chad Johnson and Brandon Marshall, and Omar Kelly of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Flores alleged he was given tasks that he doesn't think would have been required of a white head coach. Flores went 25-24 in three seasons with Miami before being let go on Jan. 10.

Flores, who was hired over the weekend to be a senior defensive assistant for the Pittsburgh Steelers, filed a class-action lawsuit against the NFL alleging racist hiring practices. Flores has no plans to abandon the lawsuit even though he has returned to coach in the league.

"I think race played a role in my firing," Flores said on the podcast. "What I mean by that is, there were things I was asked to do. There were conversations that were had. I was made out to be a difficult person to work with. I think my white counterparts wouldn't have been asked to do the things I was asked to do."

Flores did not offer specifics on what the Dolphins asked of him that he considered racially based.

Flores, who turns 41 on Thursday, is now on the staff led by Pittsburgh's Mike Tomlin, one of three Black head coaches in the league along with Houston's Lovie Smith and Miami's Mike McDaniels, who identifies as biracial. Flores interviewed for the job that ultimately went to Smith, who was an assistant head coach for the Texans last season. Flores has maintained he was not hired because of his pending litigation against the league.

Pittsburgh general manager Kevin Colbert said Monday that hiring Flores was based on Flores' track record. Flores won four Super Bowl rings with the New England Patriots and made the defensive calls during a 13-3 win over the Los Angeles Rams in 2019 that gave the franchise its sixth championship.

"I think (the hiring) says that we hired a very good quality defensive coach that can maybe help us win games," Colbert said. "And really beyond that, there's nothing else to say."

Flores, like other Black assistant coaches in the league, including Pittsburgh Steelers defensive coordinator Teryl Austin, believes NFL owners — the owners of 30 of 32 are white — are simply more likely to choose leaders who reflect what they see in the mirror each morning.

"There's a change of heart that needs to happen," Flores said. "We've got to open our minds up."

SCLC caging opens with much fanfare

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The return of 5-on-5 basketball was heralded in big way last Saturday when the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League held its opening ceremony at the Gillette Multi-Purpose Gymnasium in Gualo Rai.

Organizers behind the league didn't pull any punches in the much ballyhooed program that opened with a dance number from Saipan Music and Dance Studio dancers and followed by team parades for both the open and masters divisions.

Saipan Centennial Lions Club president Marie Javier also took care of the welcome message where she thanked everyone who made the league's opening ceremony a success.

The opening ceremony was then capped off by the selection of the best muse which went to Marianas Dental Clinic's Shaine Solomon, a 22-year-old who works at the company.

League co-coordinators Mikee Guirey and Boy Garcia extended their gratitude to SCLC, Tan Sui Lin Foundation, PC Bargain, Daniel's, BES House of Chicken, Puerto Rico Bento, SM, SMADS, Saipan Ice and Water Co., Villa Luna, Eagle Construction, and RHF Marketing Services for making the league possible.

MARK RABAGO

Saipan Centennial Lions Club president Marie Javier does the ceremonial toss for the Inaugural SCLC Basketball League between NAPA Auto's Jhun Alipio, left, and DECM's Andy Viola .

In all 20 teams are entered in the league—14 in the open category and six in the masters.

The Game and NAPA Auto drew first blood after they beat Lakay Islanders and DECM in the open and masters divisions, respectively, last Saturday.

The league resumes today with Marianas Warriors taking on Paradise Realty in the first game. It will be followed by 670 Gravity against HBR Construction. The third game will then pit Vizion Insurance versus JTM.

Friday's triple-header will start with action between Blu-Haus and Supertech UFO followed by the Marianas Dental Clinic-RNV Construction match. IT'&E will then tangle with DECM in the finale.

After giving way to open teams, the island's oldies but goodies will see action on Saturday with Blu Haus squaring off against NAPA Auto in the opener. The second game will have Blue Eagles Construction going up against Magalahi Eagles with the DECM-Marianas Dental Clinic game capping the weekend slate.

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teams having multiple chances to score with the NMI and Guam players trying to close out strong knowing that it's their women's teams' last friendly for this series.

In the end, the NMI prevailed, as the visiting team stayed with the game plan, which focused on pushing the ball hard, releasing the ball early, and showing composure on team and individual defense no matter how many attempts Guam takes.

Special credit goes to defender Gabrielle Race, whose name was called out by his teammates after each save, as she was everywhere kicking the ball out, deflecting entry passes, and putting up a body on Guam players.

"I did not have a very good game last time (scoreless draw last Sunday), so I was a bit disappointed and wanted to come out and play better. I know my teammates and coaches are counting on me on defense, so I did that for them so we can accomplish one of our goals, which is to win," said Race, who suited up for the NMI Women's National Team after coming off a hip injury.

"It was an incredible win and thanks to the efforts of everyone on the team. We all worked hard for this victory, we focused on what needed to be done and we did it. Every time we win against Guam in any sport, we always have that great feeling," Race added.

NMI Women's National Team coach Angie Ito was very pleased with the results, as their players managed to win under a very challenging weather condition and delivered in front of some NMI fans, who flew in to support them, including Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan

"Although it was wet and cold that night, the ladies pulled through and continued to work hard. Overall, every player played strong and played for each other and for the team. The victory was for them to have confidence in themselves and in their teammates. They followed the game plan and executed them," said Ito.

Meanwhile, the NMI Men's National Team led Guam on two occasions before falling short in the end, as the hosts escaped with a 3-2 victory.

Tanapon Unsa put the NMI on the board with less than 10 minutes into the game before a goal off Jason Cunliffe's free kick tied the match, 1-all. The visiting team got the upper hand back when Mareko Tekopua scored late in the first half.

However, in the second half, the Matao captain Cunliffe carried Guam on his shoulders, as he nailed a pair in the period, including the go-ahead header off NMI goalie Chris Aninzo.

Despite falling short in the game, NMI coach Michiteru Mita praised their players for the progress they've been making since Day 1 of the training camp.

"We're getting there, doing what we're supposed to do to keep up with the intensity of Guam's game. Just keep your focus and continue training and the results we desire will come in later," Mita said at the dugout after the tough loss.

The men's team is done with their friendlies, while the U20 crew was scheduled to play against Guam last night after the women's U18 match.

IAN

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quished top seed Choi, 6-2, 4-1, in their semis tiff.

In the boys 16, top seed June Yu went a perfect 4-0 in round-robin play to take the division. He secured the championship after a 6-3, 7-6 (3) victory over second seed Wataru Kadokura last Monday.

Siwoo Lee topped the boys 14 age group after outplaying Nason Wessel in the finals, 6-3, 6-4, also last Monday. Lee got the better of Yutaka Kadokura in the semis, 6-3, 6-1, while Wessel advanced to the big game after a hard-earned 2-6, 6-4, 10-4 win over Henry Choi.

In the boys 10 division, Cody Park was the last player standing after beating Michael Jeon, 6-3, in the championship round. Park advanced to the finals after eliminating Antonio Herras, 6-1. Jeon got his place in the finale after a walkover win over Daniel Kang.

Meanwhile, women's singles champion Hye Jin Elliot said her 6-2, 6-2 win over fellow Saipan International School student and good friend Serin Chung was just like a practice game.

"Since we played against each other a lot it's gotten to the point where our games are mostly for fun," she said.

The 2021 White Coconut Tennis Classic is organized by the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association.

NMSA

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want him to get treated as soon as possible before the cancer spreads."

Last Jan. 26, the Kabiriels finally flew to California and are now awaiting Jack's surgery. However, there is a holdup as they were told by the hospital that they have to pay the full amount of what the insurance cannot cover, which includes medications, some of the tests, and half of their airfare from Saipan to California and back.

"We were also informed that Jack is not eligible for the backup insurance that each patient received from medical referral. Therefore, I am kindly asking for your help in any amount to help pay for some of the medical expenses that Jack would be incurring during his admission in the hospital and treatments he'll be receiving or a simple prayer for speedy recovery and healing that comes from your heart," said Pat.

Aside from being known as the "Roadrunner Bunny" for his exploits in track, Jack Kabiriel is also famous for being the "Safety Guy" for his work in business community.

"Jack is a compassionate, thoughtful, and humble person. He goes above and beyond to help a fellow friend or family when in need. What I love about my husband is that he lent a helping hand from the heart and he does it out of love. He loves people from all walks of life. Big or small, he exhibits love. He prioritizes others' needs before his and he makes you feel important and that your feelings and needs matter."

Pat said she's putting aside her pride and is humbly asking from the bottom of her heart for anyone's help in her husband's race to fight cancer.

As of 5:22pm Chamorro Standard Time, the fundraising campaign to help defrays some of Jack Kabiriel's medical expenses has totaled $2,575 out of the $10,000 goal.

The outpouring of support didn't go unnoticed as Pat sent this message to everyone who reached out and helped: "On behalf of my husband, we thank you so much for your help. We thank each and every donor. Just like what I said in my gofundme post, we appreciate all the help and we leave it to God to return their good deeds. We keep them in our prayers always. Sending each and everyone our greeting and love

The Kabiriels have four children—Kaden, K.J., Gabby, and Koen. Their nephew, Dennis, is also considered part of the family.

To donate to Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel's medical expenses, point your browsers to https://www.gofundme.com/f/a-race-to-fight-cancer?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=p_cp%20share-sheet&fbclid=IwAR31jaQXJNTzT--YoBZqHUhkzCzj9v4uP-Txb_ZmZ80oioQEhEk-HLF2WkN50.

WANTED: SPORTS REPORTER

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Cavaliers escape LeBron's shadow as NBA's biggest surprise

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NMI Women's National Team nips Guam

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The NMI's Gabrielle Race sneaks in and intercepts a pass intended for a Guam player during their friendly game last Tuesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The NMI's Mareko Tekopua (7) catches up on defense against a Guam player as rain pours during their friendly game last Tuesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

GUAM—The NMI Women's National Team is heading home victorious after nosing out Guam, 1-0, in their friendly match last rainy Tuesday night at the Guam Football Association National Training Center.

Jannah Casarino scored the winning goal early in the second half for her second goal in the series of friendlies. The forward also hit the board in the NMI Women's U18 Team's 4-0 triumph over Guam last Saturday.

For the second goal, Casarino, again outsprinted her defender after receiving a forward pass from defender Pia Ngewakl. Casarino continued to dribble toward the right penalty area before unloading a cross. Guam goalie Kiarra Hutcherson leapt to reach for the ball, but failed to get the save as the leather dropped and rolled in, giving the NMI the goal.

Casarino, after the win, said she was surprised with the goal because her intension was to swing a cross to teammate Tamia Hix.

"Actually, the shot was supposed to be for Tamia off my cross pass. But I kicked it with my left so it curved into the goal with some help from the wind," said Casarino.

It was a cold and windy night at the GFA pitch, as it rained hard midway through the first half, which saw both

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3-time NMSA Athlete of the Year needs help

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Three-time Northern Marianas Sports Association Male Athlete of the Year Ketson "Jack" Kabiriel has a March 2 scheduled surgery in Los Angeles to help cure his stage 2 oral cancer, but his family needs help to pay the some of the medical costs.

To this end, Kabiriel's wife, Pat, has opened a gofundme account to raise money for the multi-sports athlete, who is a legend in the islands' running circles and most recently represented the CNMI in triathlon and va'a.

In her post on the crowdfunding website, Pat said Kabiriel was diagnosed with stage 2 oral cancer last December.

"Everything took a turn on our life that day. Anxiety, depression, mental exhaustion, and stress to name a few is what we went through. I would constantly fear what would happen next. His doctors back home put a stat on all his tests and referral as they

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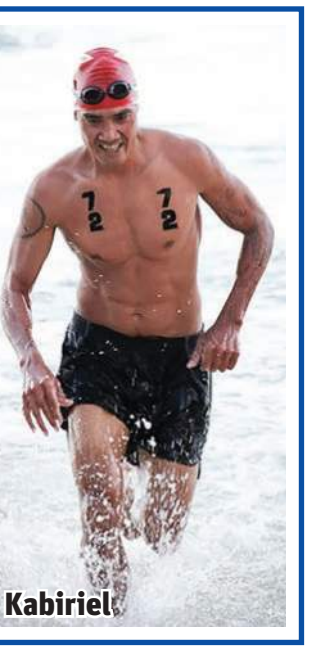

Kabiriel

Ian Chae repeats in boys singles 12

MARK RABAGO
Ian Chae in action against Jihun Park in the finals of the boys 12-and-under division of the 2022 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park.

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Ian Chae continued his giant-killing ways by winning his second boys 12-and-under division in the 2022 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the American Memorial Park.

The 11-year-old Saipan Community School student took on fellow unseeded player Jihun Park in the finals and prevailed in a score of 6-2, 6-2.

In the semifinals, the sixth grader upset top seed Ryan Choi, 6-3, 6-2, to advance to the championship round. Park, meanwhile, punched his ticket to the finals after beating Matthew Hwang, 6-3, 6-2.

Chae said he did OK in his championship match against Park in a short interview with *Saipan Tribune*.

"I did great on my serving. I did some drop shots but I made some errors. He was doing great," he said.

He dedicated his win in the White Coconut Tennis Classic to his parents.

Last month, Chae won the same age group in the 2022 SIS Student Council Tennis Tournament after defeating Eamon Tang, 6-1, 6-4, in the finals. Prior to that he van-

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